

The logo consists of a white circle containing a smaller white circle with a dot in the center, resembling a stylized eye or a play button icon.

the circle

C the Circle

Volume 3, Number 1 Fall, 1975

Editor

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Associate Editor

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Art Director

RANDY NOWELL

Advisor

KAYE LOVVERN

(editor, *The Auburn Alumnews*)

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(philosophy)

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CHARLOTTE WARD (physics)

Students:

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A. J. WRIGHT

A NOTE ON STYLE

The variety of approaches to writing and design in this issue reflects the *Circle's* function as a laboratory publication. Although each piece was reviewed by staff members and representatives of the Editorial Board, the appearance of any article, story, poem, drawing, or photograph does not necessarily indicate unanimous critical approval.

The Auburn Circle is a community publication financed through Student Activity Fees. The views expressed throughout this issue are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the publisher (the Board of Student Communications) or those of the *Circle* Editorial Board and staff. Address all correspondence to *The Auburn Circle*; 311 Union Building, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, 36830.

The *Circle* staff thanks the following individuals of the English Department for their assistance in evaluating and proofreading copy: James Allen, Bert Hitchcock, Pat Keller, Oxford Stroud.

THE INNER CIRCLE

Things are looking up for *The Auburn Circle*. Our larger circulation and increased student interest have helped make the magazine a firmly established part of the Auburn campus. Each quarter we receive more and more unsolicited contributions from writers who have not been connected with the magazine before.

But the *Circle* needs more contributions from student writers. Since the magazine's inception two years ago, roughly ninety-five writers and artists representing about thirty-five

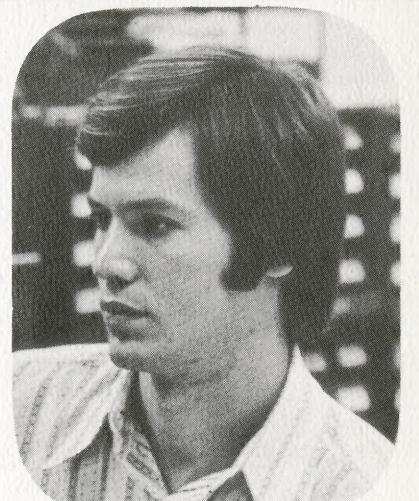


Linda Leaming

different curriculums have had work accepted for publication. That, of course, isn't a bad number, and it certainly dispels any ideas of a magazine written by and for a "literary elite"; but the point is that ninety-five isn't enough. Out of seventeen thousand students, there are bound to be many more who write creatively.

The *Circle* tries to feature something for everyone in a format you won't find in any other publication on campus: in-depth articles and essays along with a wide variety of poetry and short stories. Those of you who write have work which fits at least one of those categories. If you would like to get some feedback on it, the *Circle* is the place to come.

Deadline for submission for the



Billy Leonard

winter issue is February 1, but if you can, get it to us before that. The earlier work is submitted, the better the chance it has of making the next issue. We prefer that the manuscripts be typed and double spaced, but that is not a necessity. And please, don't send us your only copy of anything.

The important thing to remember is that you don't have to be an English major to write for the *Circle*. It's a campus magazine. That means for everyone.

—BL



Randy Nowell

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BLUEGRASS

and

HORSEPENS

BY DAVID BRADFORD AND ANNETTE NORRIS

Bluegrass music is presently enjoying a cross-cultural popularity, picking up a college audience as well as retaining its traditional listeners. Notes on Haley Center bulletin boards advertise for a banjo or string bass player to fill out a budding Bluegrass band; the same boards carry notices of almost-weekly local and regional concerts.

Why the sudden college popularity of a music form that students five years ago would have discarded along with Porter Wagoner and white socks? In 1970 Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs appeared in Cliff Hare Stadium, drawing a crowd of less than a hundred; yet last year, Earl Scruggs, clad in a marijuana leaf-embroidered shirt, played before a full house at the Auburn Student Act Building. The reason lies somewhere in the origin and evolution of Bluegrass and in the redirection of American musical trends. For a local perspective, the *Circle* attended one such Bluegrass gathering, the October Horse Pens 40 Festival outside Oneonta, and made some interesting discoveries about the origins of Bluegrass as well as the "not so typical" Bluegrass audience.

Bluegrass music remained something of an underground art form from its early nineteenth century inception until its radio revival with Nashville station WSM's "The Grand Ole Opry" and, more specifically, with the folk music movement of the 1960's. Before popularization, the methods and techniques of Bluegrass were perpetuated through family tradition in the form of rags and ballads played on the violin, the guitar, the mandolin, and the dulcimer. The banjo (although a Dixieland invention and therefore a

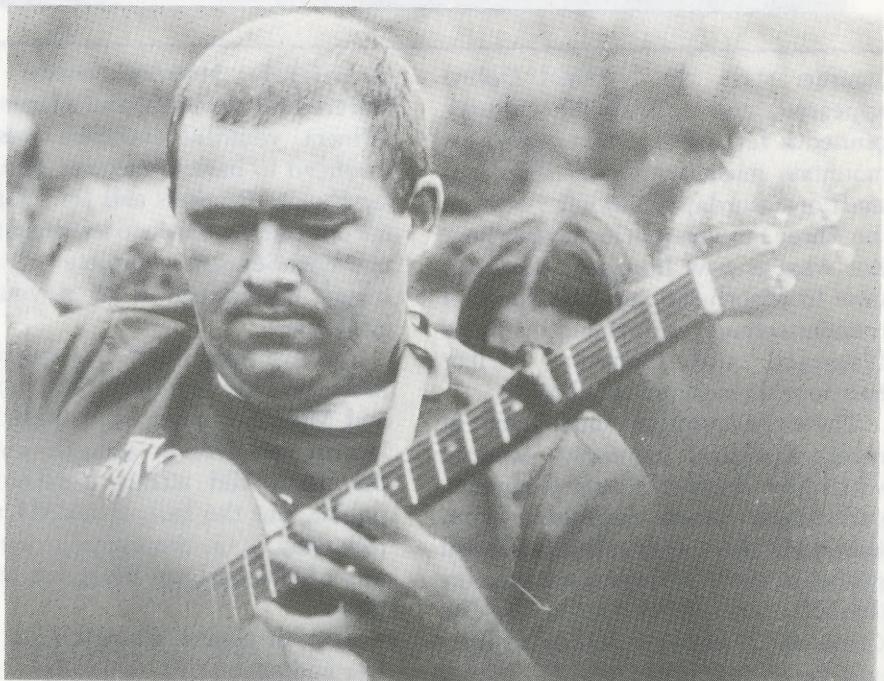
later addition) was the only original American instrument; the others were endemic to the old country, as was the music which the settlers performed upon them. The Appalachian Scots combined old world instruments and new world vitality to produce one of the only recognizable vestiges of an American peasant culture.

Whatever the sociological reasons for the sixties Folk revival might have been, they were also the impetus for the Bluegrass popularization; the Peter, Paul, and Mary—Joan Baez enthusiasts eventually searched for the roots and found Leadbelly, Pete Seeger, and Woody Guthrie. Further search led to two sources of this early American Folk; it was a product of the intermingling of two very contrary

American cultures—the Mississippi Black and the Appalachian White. Both Blues and Bluegrass received new interest.

Ironically, the Blues traveled the Atlantic to be reintroduced to the U.S. in the form of British Blues. The Rolling Stones, The Animals, and John Mayall returned the favor electrified and cockney-brogued. The British renewed roots interest in Lightin' Hopkins, John Lee Hooker, and Howlin' Wolf, and the American Blues artists suddenly found themselves surrounded with record contracts and American imitators.

Bluegrass, on the other hand, stayed at home. But it too had metamorphosed: Scruggs' three-fingered banjo picking replaced the traditional claw-



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BRADFORD



hammer style, the National Dobro appeared, and a Nashville industry pruned a few of the more ambitious mountain musicians to sell flour and snuff on Saturday afternoons between the Three Stooges and local wrestling. But what is now Bluegrass has been slow to absorb the new influences; it remains serenely untouched by Merle Haggard and Conway Twitty barroom themes and tinsel glitter.

The most important single event in recent Bluegrass popularity occurred when Doc Watson, Vassar Clements, and Merle Travis wandered from Ruritan fiddlers' conventions and local gospel stages to a Nashville studio for the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's *Will The Circle Be Unbroken*. Although over-sold and overpublicized, the album somehow resisted the commercial influences. The Nitty Gritty ap-

propriately stepped aside and featured the veterans, and a large and affluent youthful audience was introduced to basic Bluegrass. The Flying Burrito Brothers and Jerry Garcia introduced the music to left-field fans, and Earl Scruggs, complete with new image, introduced it to a younger audience.

The top forty chart was unshaken. Although very few distortion boosters and Marshall amps were traded for Martin and Gibson acoustic guitars, the music did attract a substantial public. But the lack of an AM radio following is, in the opinion of most, one of the primary Bluegrass attractions.

And, of course, Bluegrass has held one audience as its own for years: the gospel and fiddlers' convention goers. These faithfules and the young

proselytes are cultures and sometimes years apart, and Horse Pens 40 is an odd intermingling of participants. Braided hair and tinted bouffant, denim jacket and fur coat, full beards and narrow sideburns alternate across the Horse Pens' amphitheater. Caps pulled tight over their sun-seasoned faces, men squat on weathered work boots and lean against the bare autumn hardwoods. A family sits on a quilt spread across the thick cover of fallen leaves, their Irish setter sniffing leaves and passersby. The rocks rising from the slope of the hill are smothered with rapt and foot-tapping listeners.

The surrounding grounds are as diverse as the crowd; a melange of tents, campers, and lean-tos line the rutted roads and brown fields of Horse Pens. Along the footpaths are pup tents and plastic stretched for shelter; sleep-

ing bags are spread beneath rock overhangs, and huddled shapes in fatigue jackets stand before fires. Grey smoke spreads through the woods before rising into an equally grey sky. The line leading to the concession stand is a confusion of leashed dogs and transistor radios blaring the Auburn-Georgia Tech or Alabama-Mississippi games. As we stand in line waiting for hot coffee and stew, an overalled man in an "I Like Cat" cap tells us a joke, careful (after some consideration) to change the butt of the joke from "hippie" to "college student." Although unsure that he had yet found the right object, he continues with genuine enthusiasm.

We had wandered in about 10:30 that morning and heard the McLain Family, a father and three children; one daughter, not yet fifteen, could slap hell out of a string bass. The tem-

po slowed as Papa sang bass to his teenage son's lead in "I'm Using My Bible for a Roadmap." The McLains, the Marshall Family — obviously the family tradition still runs strong in Bluegrass. Before the day was over, we had heard these and other family groups, one sporting an impressive ten-year-old banjo player.

The groups varied from carefully laid out professionals to more informal down home Bluegrassers. One of the more professional groups, "Three on a String," presented a more formalized, rehearsed show with staginess reminiscent of the Smothers Brothers and harmony more indigenous to the Lettermen. The Dixie Bluegrass Boys, who featured one of the best fiddlers we heard all day, played a more standard gospel and Bluegrass program. Every group played some variation of "The Orange Blossom Special," which

never failed to draw enthusiastic applause from the crowd.

The real high point of the day in terms of virtuosity and professionalism came with Lester Flatt and the Nashville Grass. Although still in bad health after a recent operation, Lester Flatt proved that he had lost no power with an earthy version of "Wabash Cannonball" that brought a nearly frozen audience from the huddled warmth for a standing ovation, and "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," the popular theme of *Bonnie and Clyde*, lost no effect despite Earl Scruggs's replacement. Each of the Nashville Grass was featured in successive songs, interrupted only by Flatt's mellow, sorghum-toned voice telling "down home" stories and slightly off color jokes that would hardly tinge a Baptist deacon's cheek. Despite the chill,





strings somehow managed to stay in tune and fingers somehow found the right fret.

But the music is not restricted to the amphitheater: amateur musicians sit on dropped pickup truck tailgates and tune their guitars, waiting for a crowd

of two or more to gather before trying an agile hand at the music of the day. Across the Chandler's Mountain bluff, small groups listening to conversation and picking gather and dissolve.

It is as much the atmosphere as the music that draws the Horse Pens

crowd. Chandler's Mountain is miles away from the smoky university coliseums, and miles away from hypertension amplification. That's the point.

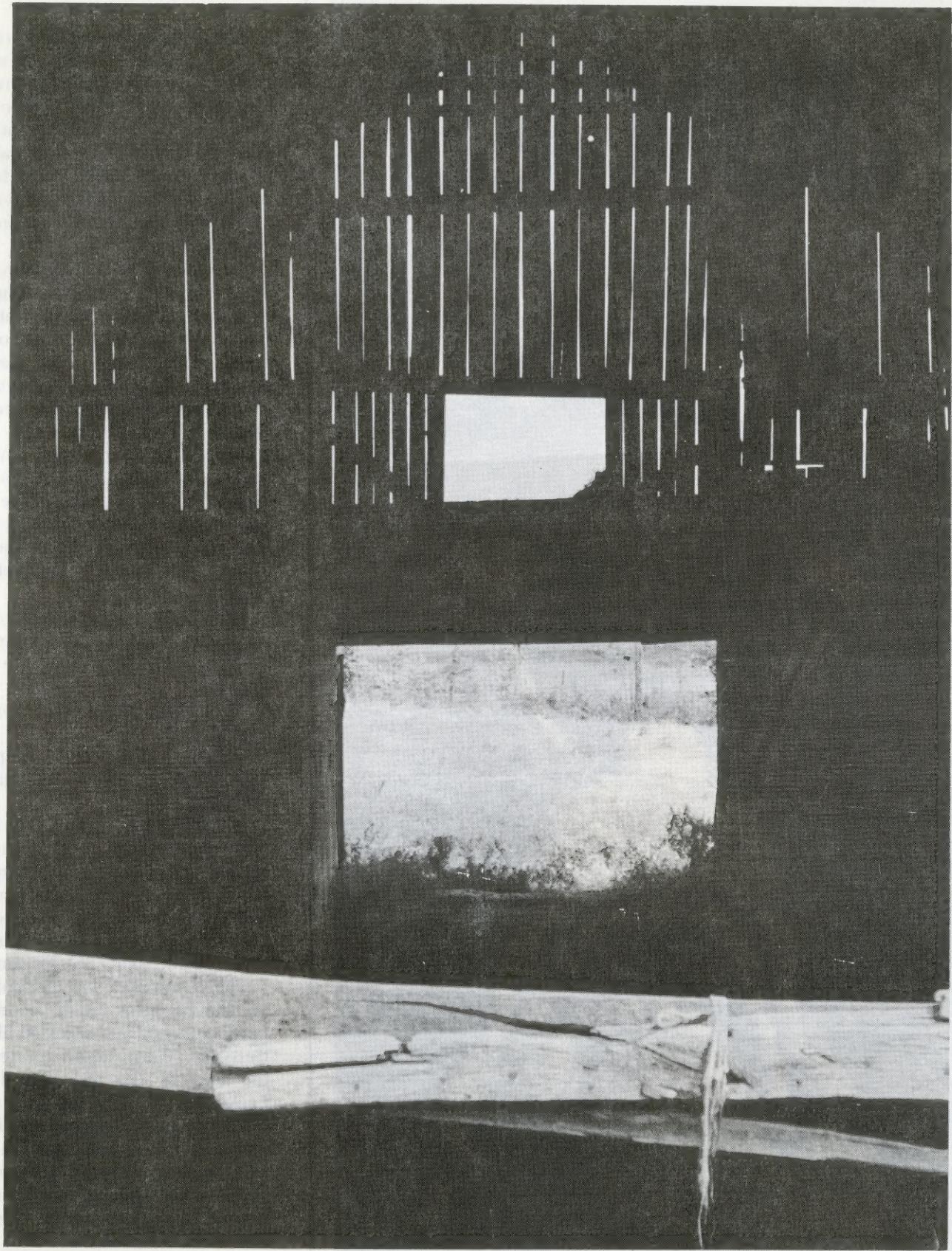


THE BULLDOZER THAT IS MOVING EARTH IN THE VACANT LOT

Large, yellow, smoking with diesel fumes,
More powerful than the moon or sun or God:
Not even He can stop you from pushing down trees
As you clear a space for more suburban dreams to grow.
Someday someone will stand where I stand now
And see nothing but what I see now,
Only farther on.

—John Lawford Swanson

PIRELLAGE ZONE 10



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID BRADFORD

and with no more "good" to work
the slate word is in. I'm dredged off frontier
time, still not aware where I am. Tilted

in the cockpit
when grass is green

BY JOHN WILLIAMS

The pale glow of a full moon cast the forest into half darkness and cloaked with shadows the edge of the meadow where the trees stopped. There was no sound, as if all the night creatures of the forest lay frozen in anticipation, as if all the half dark world held its breath. The motionless air was chill and damp. Nowhere did a branch stir, or a leaf rustle.

Presently, a faint sound broke the silence and the forest crouched and waited, frightened at the intrusion. The sound grew louder. First, only the rustle of leaves and twigs, then clear footsteps, then laughter, then voices. A couple emerged from the forest and paused just in the shadows on the meadow's edge. The two embraced and stood together a long moment. Neither felt the closeness of the towering shadow; neither heard it move. The forest listened. Again the quiet voices, the muffled laughter. The shadow moved closer.

The young woman suddenly opened her eyes and drew back her head.

"Hey baby, come on," the young man said.

"No...wait, Byron. Did you hear something?"

"Hear something? No." He pressed himself to the young woman again, but she withdrew.

A sudden jolt of terror froze her body. Panic paralyzed her mind. Fear seized her like a clammy fist. "Byron..." Words choked in her throat and gurgled into animal sounds. She saw the gigantic shadow. It was upon them. "God!...No!" She screamed.

The young man was suddenly jerked from her arms and the bones of his body crunched and crackled like brittle twigs. Warm liquid spurted onto the legs of the girl. She lurched backward, swinging her arms madly, but her feet were trapped. She fell and screamed. "God help me! Oh God!" The shadow slithered forward and engulfed her. One last muffled scream echoed through the forest, then died. The shadow withdrew.

After a long moment the forest released its breath in a long sigh of relief, and slowly came to life again.

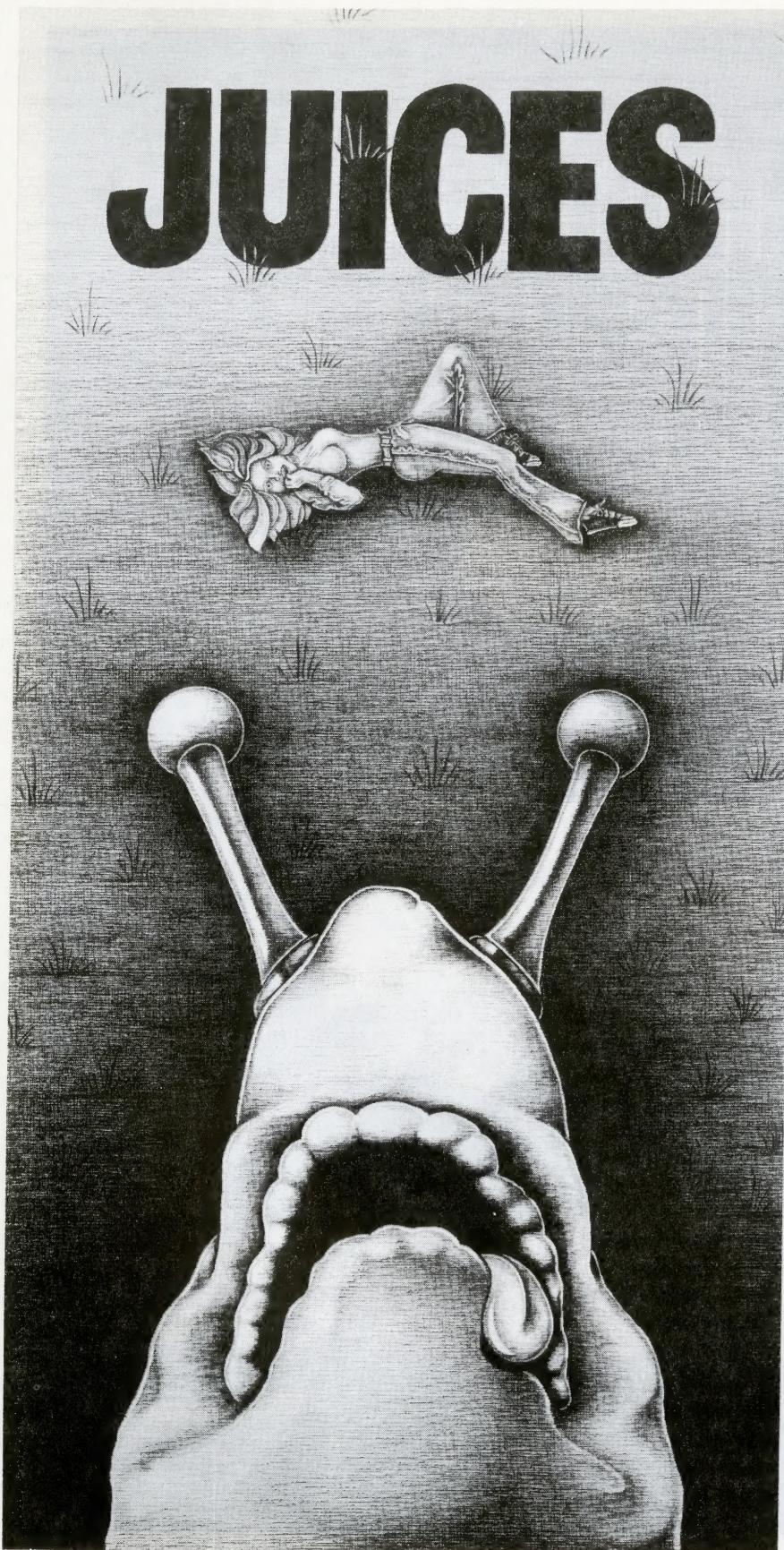


ILLUSTRATION BY RANDY NOWELL

The first streak of morning light touched the far edges of the eastern sky.

* * *

Rupert Snell got out of bed and fumbled with the kindling wood in the fireplace. In a moment, the wood caught and he nursed it carefully into a steady blaze. He went into the kitchen and started breakfast. Just as the coffee was ready, Marta came sleepily into the central room, with Bonzo behind her.

"Where's Byron?" she said.

Rupert turned from the stove and smiled. "Good morning, baby," he said. Bonzo trotted into the kitchen and Rupert gave him a pat on the head.

"Where's Byron?" she repeated.

"I don't know. Ruby's car is outside. They must be off somewhere in his truck."

"I didn't hear them last night."

"Well," Rupert said. "They must not have come in. You know how Byron is. There's no telling where they are."

Marta stood close to the fire and rubbed her arms, yawning. "I heard rats again last night."

Rupert set the eggs and bacon on the table. "I'll kill them baby. It'll just take a couple of days. I mean, I told you there might be rats. But don't worry, the poison will kill them."

"They give me the creeps," Marta said. "I don't mind living out here—I just hate rats."

"I hate them too," Rupert answered. "I'm doing all I can."

"What's all this crap?" Marta asked. "What crap?"

"This slimy stuff all over the place."

Rupert came into the room. Several slug trails crisscrossed around the corner of the room, leading up the walls and into the cracks between the logs. Bonzo followed Rupert and sniffed the corner. "Just slugs," Rupert said.

"Slugs," Marta repeated. "How disgusting. Rats and slugs. This place is like a biology lab."

"Just give me *time*, baby," Rupert said raising his voice a trifle. "I mean I can't kill everything in one day, you know."

"We're getting close to nature all right," Marta complained. "Getting right in with the slugs..."

"Okay!" Rupert said sharply and stalked back into the kitchen.

Night came, and Byron and Ruby were still missing. Rupert knew his brother well and didn't worry. Byron disappeared sometimes for days, always to show up again with some wild tale. Rupert knew it was nothing unusual. But Marta was uneasy.

"Maybe we ought to go into town," she said.

"That's twelve miles, baby," Rupert said. "Besides, you know they're not in town. They're out in the woods somewhere, or at somebody's house."

Marta frowned. "I just don't like it. Why would they disappear right after we moved here? And how come Ruby's car is out there?"

"Because she's with him. Don't worry about it, baby."

But Marta did worry and she did not sleep that night. Each little noise she heard was a rat. And she was afraid to open her eyes for fear she would see slugs all over the walls.

She dozed and awoke a dozen times. Finally, she got out of bed and Bonzo sat up on the rug. She grabbed the flashlight and headed nervously for the kitchen. The still silence of the night was shattered by her sudden scream.

Rupert reared out of bed and stumbled into the den. Bonzo barked uneasily. "What's the matter?" Rupert cried. "Marta! Where are you?" He turned on the light. In the middle of the room she stood trembling. The flashlight was unlit in her hand. Rupert felt nausea seize his stomach. "Come here Marta," he said. "Get away from it." She came to him and he held her.

"Rupert," she said. "Kill it. Please kill it."

The entire room—the walls, the floor, the ceilings—glistened with the silk of slug trails. In the middle of the floor, where Marta's flashlight had discovered it, was the slug. It was three feet long and as thick as Rupert's arm. Its little antennae protruded like horns. They were the size of fists.

"Rupert, please kill it."

Rupert held his breath and stepped cautiously across the slippery silk and went into the kitchen. He grabbed the box of salt and came back into the room.

"We need to get it outside first," he said.

The back door was five yards away. Rupert opened it and the chill night air blew in. Rupert grabbed his shovel from the back porch and approached the slug.

The creature began moving sluggishly towards the door. Its slimy, mucous body writhed and pulsated as it undulated across the floor. Bonzo approached it again and smelled it. He backed away and barked again. Rupert reached forward with the shovel and felt his stomach churn as he tried to scoop it. The slug stopped and its body contracted. Rupert got it into the shovel and threw it outside. Bonzo ran out behind it, barking. "Marta, bring the salt," Rupert said.

She stepped delicately across the slime and handed the box to Rupert. He poured it all onto the monster and stumbled aside to vomit as the shining, muscular tissue dissolved into thick soupy liquid and slithered out across the ground like juice from a punctured eyeball.

The next morning, after breakfast, as Rupert began exploring the house, plugging holes and cracks, Marta went outside to feed Bonzo. Her scream shattered the morning stillness.

"What is it?" Rupert said, running outside.

Marta stood with her eyes closed and her head back. Her lips were quivering and her hands were clenched tightly in front of her.

"What's the matter, Marta?" Rupert said again.

"Bonzo's bowl," she said. "Oh God!"

Rupert looked down at the little plastic dish. It was filled with slugs. Perhaps fifty of them were crowded into it or clung to the sides. They writhed together like settling intestines.

"Okay, Marta, just come inside," Rupert said and took her by the shoulders. "It's okay—just come inside."

By lunch, Rupert was finished with his work and he came into the kitchen where Marta was making soup. Her apprehension was not hidden.

"Where are Byron and Ruby, Rupert?" she said.

"I've told you, Marta. They're just

out somewhere. So quit worrying about it."

"They should have been back by now. I'm going to call the police."

"The police?" Rupert laughed. "Are you joking? For crying out loud Marta, just be patient. You know Byron does crazy things like this. We've got something else to worry about right now, like how that thing got in here last night. Jeez, it's the biggest one I've ever seen."

"I can't live like this," Marta said, shaking her head with finality. "I just can't live like this anymore."

"Marta, you promised me," Rupert said. "You promised you would stay at least three months."

"But my God, Rupert! How did I know my best friend was going to disappear with your weirdo brother? How did I know we were going to have to compete with slugs the size of baseball bats for the den? I guess next they'll be trying to get into bed with us!"

"There's one good thing though," Rupert said gravely. "If we run out of syrup, we can just go out and melt a slug or two."

As late afternoon approached, the sky took on a yellowish tint and the forest lay still, expectantly. Not a breeze stirred anywhere. A few birds fluttered nervously among the low bushes. Rupert stood in the front yard and watched the sky. Bonzo sat beside him uneasily as if he were afraid to venture farther into the quiet. Marta came outside and reached down to pet Bonzo.

"This is eerie," she said.

"We're going to have a storm."

"The radio said tornadoes."

"Really?" Rupert said, turning to look at Marta. "Well I hope Byron gets back in soon. He can see the sky though—he knows what's about to happen."

"You're worried now, I can tell," Marta said. "You know something's wrong."

"No, I don't know something's wrong," Rupert said. "And I'm not worried. You know how Byron is."

"Yeah, I know how he is all right," Marta said. "He's insane. I think we should go into town."

"Now?" Rupert said. "Are you

crazy? We can't go now, not with the weather about to blow up like this."

"God, I wish I'd never let you talk me into coming out to this place. I hate it!" She turned and stalked back to the house. Rupert turned away and did not watch her. He stood resignedly and watched the sky.

Half an hour later the first breeze began, gently at first then increasing in force as night fell. Soon, massive dark clouds rolled across the pale sky, and as the wind began swaying and bending the tall pines, ominous rolls of thunder vibrated through the heavens. Lightning flashed, illuminating the woods all around the cabin, and the rain began.

By nine o'clock, the storm was raging. Slanting, driving rain flooded down in sheets, pooling up in low places, flowing down the hill in the front yard like a river. The howling wind whipped and beat the trees around the cabin without pity. Small saplings cracked and fell while limbs from mighty oaks and pines snapped like twigs and crashed to the forest floor. The electric wires broke, and as the rain and thunder continued, the only light came from the irregular bolts of lightning.

Inside the small cabin, Rupert and Marta lit candles and fanned the fire to life, while Bonzo stayed close to them, whimpering with fear.

"I hope they're somewhere safe," Marta said. "It's too late to run now."

"They're all right," Rupert tried to assure her, and himself. "They're okay. Right now I'm worried about these trees falling on the cabin."

"Rupert, after this is over, I'm leaving," Marta said suddenly, without emotion.

"What! You can't!" Rupert cried, jumping up from the floor, the last bits of his reserve crumbling. "You promised! You promised me you would stay!"

"I don't care anymore!" Marta cried back. "I don't care about this two-bit shack, or the woods, or you, or anything! I'm leaving and I mean it!" She stood up and stalked to the front window.

Rupert felt everything collapse. "Okay, do what you want, I don't care," he said. "Leave. I don't care."

Marta looked out the window and didn't answer. A flash of lightning crackled through the sky and lit up the small yard and the woods.

"Don't even bother to explain. Just leave. I don't care anymore either."

But suddenly a chill tension was in the room. An edgy silence settled for an instant, like a clammy fog.

"Rupert," Marta said quietly.

Rupert stood frozen still, alert and listening.

"Rupert...come here."

He was silent and motionless a long moment. Finally, he said, "What's the matter?"

"I saw something...outside."

Ice tingled up Rupert's spine. He felt his stomach and groin tighten. He felt his heart beating wildly.

Slowly, he walked across the room and looked out the window into the darkness. Time stopped and for an eternity the rain fell and the wind blew. Bonzo stood whining softly beside Rupert.

Lightning flashed. "Look!" Marta cried, but Rupert already saw it. The shadow—the dark, gigantic mass.

"What is it, Rupert?" Marta cried.

Lightning flashed again. The thing was enormous—the size of a house. The surface of it glistened wetly in the brief light. It was moving into the front yard.

Suddenly, Rupert broke himself away and ran into the bedroom. He grabbed his rifle, loaded it, grabbed three extra rounds, and ran back. He flung open the front door and took two steps into the storm. Bonzo, in a frenzy, ran after him, towards the monstrous dark form.

"Bonzo!" Marta cried, but the dog kept running, barking wildly. He ran into the darkness and vanished. The thing writhed towards them.

"It got Bonzo!" Marta screamed and ran outside.

"Marta, get inside!" Rupert shouted, but she ran toward the creature. "Marta, get away from it!"

"Bonzo!" she cried.

Lightning flashed again and Rupert saw it clearly. Two horns stuck up on the head like little trees. The slimy, glistening body curled like a monstrous snake.

"It's a slug!" Rupert screamed. "Get away from it, Marta!"

"Bonzo!"

Rupert threw the rifle to his shoulder and fired into the mass. The bullet made a squishing, thudding sound as it struck the flesh. The creature roared like a bull elephant and reared up on its tail. Rupert fired again and the creature screamed louder. Rupert fired his last shot. "Marta! Get back!" he cried.

"It killed Bonzo!" Marta screamed and a bolt of lightning lit the yard. Rupert saw her in the shadow of the towering creature, screaming like a madwoman. The slug lurched forward with a groan and collapsed upon her. Her last scream echoed in Rupert's ears. He was alone.

The creature began whining louder and started towards Rupert. It was only twenty yards away. It moved fast, undulating its body, screaming in pain and anger. Rupert reloaded his gun and fired again. The bullets thudded into the beast but did not slow it. Still it came. Suddenly, just as another bolt of lightning illuminated the yard, the creature reared up again on its tail, towering thirty feet into the air. It swayed a moment then fell forward onto the cabin, collapsing it like a matchbox. Rupert took a diving leap and barely escaped to the side. Screaming, the creature began to writhe and gather itself up again. The huge horned head swung towards Rupert. Rupert stood up, and

stumbled. The creature reared up to its full height and roared. Then, in the splintering of an instant, a bolt of lightning crackled down from the heavens, and the slug glowed white and blue for one second, swayed on its tail, then collapsed backwards into the pine trées.

A softer flash of lightning lit the yard, and Rupert saw the gurgling ooze melt and boil through the pine trees like mucous-syrup and flood down the hill like a lanced boil. He rolled over onto his back, exhausted. Damn this country life, he thought.



IN THE RILKE EXHIBIT

Walking through the lives of German poets contained in glass and polished wooden cases, a photograph of Rilke held me in a grip that was sacrosanct and terrifying, hard and hopeful, like the stone requiems of Medieval monks that depict both the grail and the smiling skull. From twenty-one years the poet stared with dark, white-rimmed eyes into timeless distance, his beard ragged and patched, his shoulders tensely stooped

like carved stone. Bulbous, searching eyes appeared at once blank and penetrating. His youthful folly seemed mine—a perpetually slipping race, no frame to hold his wandering single self or baseless dreams. Out of that abysmal stance sprang greatness. Thus I thought, held in that grip, that I might compare myself to Rilke on a respective birthday, preserve my blushing egotism in words, and wish my uncertainty to pass away

like tourists rushing through a dusty museum. Caught, singing, and held in that grip, the self darkly awaits release, to slip from time's eternity and the distant defeat of a stone's deterioration. The artful marriage of two moments is sealed with uncertainty and their separation with reluctance. The dust settles in the museum and smiles beautifully on the ages of dying men who end their moving sojourn with a gift.

—Jim Warren

Slab Creek — Sand Mountain, Circa 1812

BY TOM HAGOOD

Sand Mountain forms a vast plateau rising about six hundred feet above the Tennessee Valley. Up until the 1890's, the area was largely neglected because settlers preferred the richer and more accessible bottom lands of the surrounding valleys. Early historians knew little of the mountain and referred to it as a "vast and howling wilderness."

Then, before the mountain was settled, its timbers cut, and its soil put to the plow, the region was covered with virgin hardwood forest. Oak, beech, hickory, poplar, and a few pines grew so tall that tree limbs seldom came closer than twenty feet to the ground. The foliage of the tree tops was so thick that it shielded much of the forest floor from the sun's rays.

Among the first white men to cross the mountain was an expedition of Tennessee scouts led by Davy Crockett. The year was 1812, and the frontiersmen were following the trail of Andrew Jackson and his army, who were on their way to fight the Creek Indians on the Tallapoosa River more than one hundred miles to the south. John S.C. Abbot, a member of the expedition, recorded Crockett's trip, and his account produced one of the few descriptions of the mountain before it was settled.

The party came up the mountain through what later came to be Jackson's Gap, near the present day town of Albertville, and once on the mountain they followed Slab Creek. Abbot reported a vast and untouched wilderness; most of the forest floor was damp and so dark that it looked as

if it were suspended in permanent twilight. The twilight world was frequently broken by well defined shafts of light, which penetrated through gaps in the thick foliage of the tree tops, shining like luminous beams into a vast and dark cathedral. A thick layer of humus covered the forest floor, creating a perfect environment for a great variety of ferns and exotic plants, but there was a complete absence of thick underbrush.

Abbot reported that the mountain supported a great variety of fish, mammals, reptiles, and insects. He told of being able to see deer at great distances through virgin timber. He also reported seeing cougar, black bear, and beaver along the creek. Wild strawberries covered some areas in such thickness that they stained the horses hooves the color of blood. In other areas fields of mandrake covered acre after acre. Still other areas were covered with a hardy species of grass which the frontiersmen called bluegrass because of its similarity to species they had seen in Kentucky. Abbot reported that it was "as soft and verdant as any gentleman's park."

Slab Creek was reported to run clear and deep. The creek bank was covered with a variety of ferns, mosses, lichens, and grasses. In some places cattails grew out into the creek itself.

Just after dusk the party came to a broad, grass-covered plateau on top of which burned an immense bonfire; the fire, along with a harvest moon, illuminated a Cherokee village which consisted of six or eight lodges. Engaged in various tasks were about forty

men, women, and children. They were described as meek, gentle people willing to do anything to please their guests. Most of the men, armed with bows and arrows, were shooting at a mark near the base of a large tree which was brightly illuminated by a pitch pine knot. Abbot described it as "a scene of sublimity and beauty, of peace and loveliness, which no artist could adequately transfer to canvas." Some of Crockett's men joined the Indians at their sport until the village settled down for the night.

Just as the hustle and bustle of the village was replaced by the tranquility of nighttime in the forest, the silence was broken by a shrill cry emanating from the fringes of the forest. Instantly everyone was on his feet and ready for trouble. A Cherokee runner made his appearance with news that scouts had seen Creek warriors cross the Coosa River that day. The Cherokees were so alarmed that they immediately packed their belongings and left.

* * *

Today Slab Creek does not run deep or clear: the bottom is filled with sediment and the creek floods easily. It no longer supports a great variety of life—carp, water snakes, bluegill, and catfish are all that can survive in any abundance. The cattails have managed to survive in just a few isolated spots.

The virgin forest is a memory of the past, replaced by second growth timber, always re-cut as it starts to grow tall, and cultivated fields, which have long since lost their thick topsoil and must be supplemented with fertilizer in order to grow crops.

Today the young trees grow much more thickly, and much of the land near the creek is choked with an impenetrable mass of underbrush. The forest floor is brightly illuminated; the darkness and dampness of the original forest are gone. There are no longer wild strawberries in the area, although pampered relatives thrive in local gardens. Fields of mandrake still grow where there is sufficient dampness and shade. The bluegrass has not fared well: An observant woodsman may occasionally find a few patches of it where dark, damp conditions are created by some natural obstruction, such as a bluff, and it comes up in local yards every spring but soon wilts in the summer heat.

Cultivated fields in the area still bear evidence of Indian life: The dark carbon residue of long ago campfires remains, and the soil occasionally yields stone artifacts from the Cherokee village. Many of the animals reported by the expedition no longer exist in the area; others have managed to survive and a few have thrived. After a period of virtual extinction, deer are more populous than ever; they have adapted well to the second growth forest. Cougar and bear are considered extinct in the area, although there are a few reported sightings in less populated areas. Beaver, like deer, were once almost extinct in the area, but now they again populate Slab Creek.

Since white men first settled the mountain, it has suffered a drastic change: Although many of the original life forms survive, few thrive, while others cling tenuously to life, and only scattered remnants of the forest's original grandeur remain.

Think of her new.

*An unspoiled country lying
open to the sun.*

*Think of oceans of beauty,
instead of scattered puddles,
muddy and drying up.*

(H.G. Wells)



PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM HAGOOD

I MET KONGA WILD

FICTION BY BILL CONFER

Not that I need say it, but the Missacaw County Fair is the biggest event around here, even bigger than the annual Jaycee car wash and picnic or the bi-semester fire drill at Missacaw County School. No kidding. Every year in September one of those gypsy carnival crews (you know—the ones that hit all the shopping center grand openings) print some posters when they enter lower Alabama and, as if out of last year's remnants of cotton candy cores and cigarette butts, the Missacaw County Fair is reborn.

What they do is convert the speedway into a make-shift fairground, see, and hang a bunch of those little plastic pennants, light up the midway and, like moths, the entire county population flutters toward the light. Everyone looks forward to it but me.

I go too, though. Flora and the kids and I. Every year. We pay 75¢ a head to get in the place, 40¢ per ride, 50¢ per sideshow game that can't really be won, and 50¢ per "attraction." Like moths to light. Sure you can see the 4-H and Boy Scout exhibits, and the army band from Ft. Benning plays at night; but no one would pay to see that. No, without the opportunity to lose a couple bucks trying to throw an over-inflated football through a pigmy-sized tire or loop a ring around a stalk with a whistle or a pack of cigarettes taped to it or see the sword swallower or the "real" hermaphrodite no one would show. It would just be a lit speedway with a Boy Scout or two saluting a platoon of moths and mosquitoes.

"Ticket. Ticket, mister." I'd been daydreaming, made dopey by the monotonous bellowing of the carousel

music. My son, Sammy, was looking up at me impatiently from a blue and yellow polka dotted horse. The carousel master nudged me. "Kid can't ride without a ticket, mister," he said.

"Oh," I said wondrously, "I've got it. Here. Sorry." I looked toward Sammy. His horse snickered at me mercilessly through paint-flecked lips.

"You pay 40¢ for this?" the polka dotted horse seemed to say.

"My kid likes it," I replied telepathically.

The carousel made its time worn journey while a hidden amplifier blurted out the garbled strains of some familiar melody. Sammy waved his arms like a "real cowboy" as I watched his horse bob up and down, up and down. Realizing I was becoming a trifle seasick, I turned toward my wife. I'll be damned if that horse's smile didn't widen. "Flora?" She was helping Clarissa into the boat ride. They have these little boats with wheels underneath and a bell tied to a string on top. They go in circles also, but the boats do not bob. I decided to watch Clarissa, chuckling with the realization that the boat ride did not make me seasick. A loud speaker generated "putt, putt, putting" noises obscenely. Flora waved gaily at Clarissa. As for Clarissa, she was torturing the little bell on top. A small Negro girl from the boat in front turned menacingly toward Clarissa. As she was out of her reach, however, the little Negro faced forward again and took her wrath out on *her* little bell. I was becoming headachey.

Both rides ended simultaneously, belching forth kids in all directions. Sammy made his way towards me, legs bowed after his long cattle drive.

"Thanks, stranger!" he chirped.

"That's all right, pardner. My pleasure."

"Smile when you say that." I smiled, of course.

Not too distant from the carousel a rather blubbery young man had settled himself in front of the beer can pitch game. Three unattached girls nestled by him. What they do is give you a soft rubbery ball and all you have to do is knock a stack of three cans off the entire table. The barker indicated to a young Negro to set up the cans. The chubby man easily knocked them over much to the delight of his cheering section. He jauntily presented the nearest girl with a doll and flipped the barker 50¢ more in the same motion. After two attempts he swatted down another stack of cans. He gave this doll to the second girl. The barker admitted the man was too good for him. The young man was not going to let him off that easy; he wanted to play again so all three girls could have their very own dolls. The barker admitted his hands were tied and accepted the half dollar while the Negro reached into a basket for three more cans and stacked them. It took the chubby young man \$7 worth of tosses to win the third doll. What could he do? His hands were tied.

Flora, meanwhile, was fighting her way through a swarm of kids, dragging a screaming Clarissa behind her. Clarissa's little finger pointed at nothing in particular behind her. "What's the story on Clarissa, Florrie?"

"She wants the boat. She wants to take it home." Her face constricted like it always does when one of life's great ironies has been flung at her unsuspectingly. If she were a man I would have

thought someone had just kneed her in the groin. That was her face.

"Aw, Clarrie," I said soothingly, "the boat's not yours, honey. That man was nice enough to let you ride in his boat. Wasn't that nice of him? Now wasn't it?" Her lower lip stuck out so far you could set a table on it. "C'mon, we'll get you and Sam some cotton candy. How about that!" I bargained. That nice man, by the way, was wearing the shirt they must have given him when discharged from the navy, which, judging from the odor, transpired some two years previous. Both arms were liberally covered with (mostly obscene) tattoos. "Eat it," his wrist said. Every time he bent his other arm at the elbow a shapely torso responded. His rank at discharge was bosun's mate, first class.

A very bored, washed-out woman had been charged with the task of dispensing cotton candy. She obviously did not relish it. A cigarette dangled precariously from the corner of her lip. Her hair was webbed with stray strands of cotton candy, giving it a rather sickly pinkish glow. Some of the prodigal strands had not made the complete journey to her hair; they had decided to settle on her T-shirted bosom. I imagined her to be the boat ride operator's wife. I fought a disgusting picture of him licking the candy from her, cooing perversely as he did. As she made one final swoop around the machine an ash toppled from her cigarette and was quickly obscured by swirls of pink. I smiled weakly at her. "How much?" I said.

"Seventy cents for two." Her voice was utterly toneless.

Florrie whispered in my ear for us to do something while our kids fought with the cotton candy. The kids were admiring the Octopus. The Octopus had mechanical tentacles that went up and down rhythmically while moving around and around at great speeds. My eyes fell on one small boy whose eyes were wide with terror. By contrast, the look on Sam and Clarrie's faces portrayed excited expectation. Florrie didn't want them to take their treat on a ride because it might touch a seat or a safety bar or something. "You don't know who's sat there," she said. "I mean, someone could have a disease or

something." My main concern had to do with the grotesque picture of Sam and Clarrie hanging over the side of the Octopus spewing regurgitated cotton candy, meat loaf, and cabbage on everyone behind them, all of whom are securely strapped in their seats. I nodded vehemently.

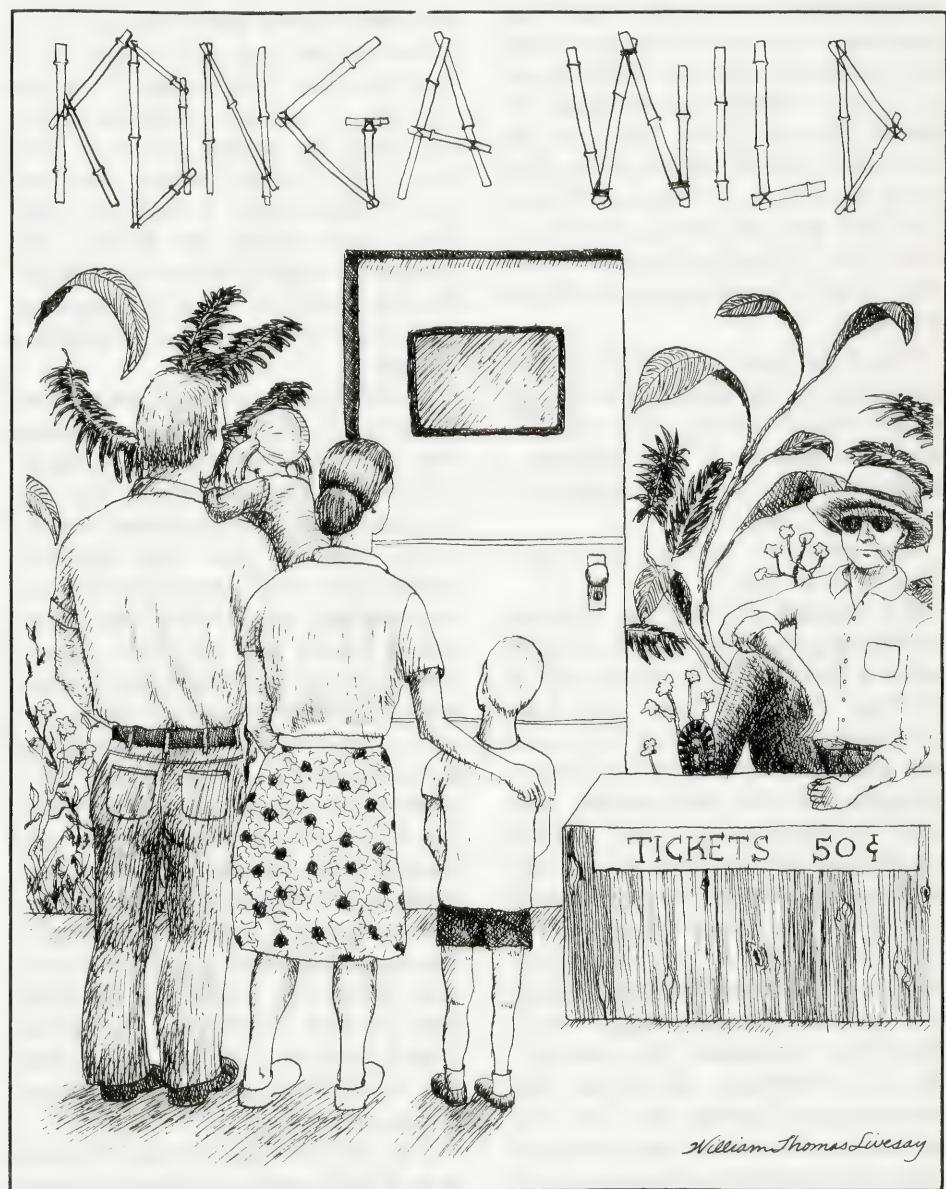
Over little protests we paid two dollars to enter a tent labeled "Wonders of the Earth." Painted over much of the front were fire-breathing dragons with the caption "see, alive, the fearsome Komodo dragon," snake-wrapped vines, and signs proclaiming six-legged cows, the pig with human hands, and (yes, folks) a rabbit with two heads.

The first thing that we saw was a cow with something resembling a leg

protruding from its anus, and something less like a leg to the side of it. "Moo," it said. Clarrie shrieked and grabbed my hand while Sam shivered. The cow, oblivious to our presence, found the hay much more interesting than us.

The fierce Komodo dragon was real all right. It stretched for nearly two and one-half feet. It did not breathe fire while we were there. Sammy told me confidently that he had seen a baby one in our back yard out by the woodshed. I looked at him man to man and told him not to alarm the ladies. He didn't. Sam still swaggered from the merry-go-round and this confidential information made him feel very manly.

There were a couple of garden



William Thomas Livesay

variety snakes in wire cages. The pig with human hands was pickled as was the cat with two tails. A "wild" ocean squid sat marooned in a sea of formaldehyde. The rabbit with two heads was stuffed. So much for the wonders of the earth. And all for just two dollars.

Sammy wanted to stalk through the Horror House, a feat of bravery required of male children his age. I could pay 50¢ for my son's manhood. The ticket taker situated himself behind an orange booth, upon which an unconvincing ghost had been painted in white and black on the front, and a witch with a warty nose and a broom colored the side. From my angle it appeared as though the witch was swatting the ghost with her broom. I determined to figure out if this was intentional or not while Sam flaunted his prepubescent manhood. Unfortunately, I had grabbed a dollar with the hand Clarrie had held onto when the cow spoke and the bill refused to relinquish itself to its new owner. "I know I'm tight with my money, but this is ridiculous," I joked to the man behind the counter with the ghost on it. He did not laugh.

The dollar and I regretfully parted and Sammy soon appeared at the exit of the Horror House. Very soon, in fact. "Nothing to it," he laughed. I reached for his hand to continue. It was clammy and cold.

"I'm glad you enjoyed it," I said, "You've done fine."

We decided to make the Octopus our last stop so if the kids got sick they could at least have the satisfaction of knowing they had seen and done everything before leaving. The next tent was that of the sword swallower, fire-eater, human pin cushion, and "real" hermaphrodite. The painted canvas depicted a bosomy and scantily clad beauty of a sword swallower with her shapely legs spread as she swallowed a sword in a very suggestive manner. The fire-eater stood a twelve foot muscled giant with a black handle-bar moustache. His eyes glaring, he mockingly swallowed this tremendously flaming bar. The way the human pin cushion was portrayed made him appear like he came out of

de Sade's favorite dream. He was besieged by pins and knives stuck several inches in him. Blood trickled from several of the wounds. The largest space, by far, was devoted to the hermaphrodite. Boldly printed in green was "HERMAPHRODITE" with merely a gargantuan exclamation point underneath. "That'll bring 'em in," I figured. It brought us in, I know. Not the hermaphrodite really, but the others. I must admit I did want to see this beauty lasciviously swallow swords. As it turned out, the sword swallower, pin cushion, and fire-eater were one and the same—a fiftyish man naked to the waist with a magnificently barreled belly. He also possessed frosty hair piled on his head, talked filthy, and wore eye make-up. He did swallow swords, he did blow fire, he did stick himself with pins, as well as thrust ice picks up each nostril and in each tear duct. That's what Flora says anyway; I was not watching. I was watching the crowd, however. One guy, a Ft. Benning soldier with one arm slung around a strikingly ugly date, was calling for blood. The human pin cushion-sword swallower-fire-eater did not bleed. I cannot explain this, but I suspect he did not have a heart.

It cost fifty cents extra to see the hermaphrodite. No, the sword swallower was not the hermaphrodite also, but he did do all the barking for him, her...the hermaphrodite. He explained convincingly that the only way the hermaphrodite could prove his-her hermaphroditity was, of course, to appear naked before our very eyes. Surely someone who makes a living standing naked before throngs of spectators with healthy scientific interests deserves to get paid a little extra. Nearly everyone agreed. I was disturbed by the first part of the spectacle and wanted nothing to do with the second. Neither did Florrie. Sam and Clarrie held no opinion, not knowing what a hermaphrodite was. On the way out, Sam asked me where the fire-eater kept his fuel. I told him I thought he kept it in his fat stomach. Sam passed this noteworthy tidbit on to Flora and Clarissa.

The last stop before the Octopus was a trailer with a plywood jungle

facade. Painted-on bamboo characters stated simply "Konga Wild." No one, of course, would pay fifty cents with this to go on. I mean no one would want to be taken in so easily, so further information was provided below. This, by the way, was not printed in bamboo-ese. It read: This is a man-monkey. Yes, an incredible freak of nature. A cross between an ape and a man. A throwback to early prehistoric times. You've never before seen anything like this! Alive!

We paid two dollars because we had never before seen anything like this. The barker apparently thought everyone had because he wasn't standing out in front with a blaring microphone hustling the people, urging them to come in and be amused. He possessed no spiel, he had no forgotten mystery, no unexplainable truth, no marvel of science or scientific import. He made no mention of Tarzan, King Kong, or even Cro-Magnons. He sat with one leg propped up on the ticket counter, idly smoking a cigarette and watching the people pass by. Wishing him to do well, I thought momentarily of informing him on how to triple his business. It was his business, however, and I offered nothing. Nothing except two dollars, of course. I didn't really want to go in, but I did not especially want to face the Octopus yet either. My main concern was to give the cotton candy more time to digest. An image of my kids' vomit setting off a chain reaction of retching, and a swirling Octopus-full of fellow vometers crossed briefly before my mind's eye. Yes, I could afford two dollars to spare us that embarrassment.

A rope partitioned the spectator section from a curtained chamber. A naked light hung from the ceiling directly above the chamber. "You've come to see Konga Wild," a voice said and the partition slowly parted.

Before us sat a smallish man in a bare wooden chair and nothing more. Long, wispy hair covered his head—his whole head, even his cheeks, forehead, and neck. He was clad only in purple swimming trunks with a garish yellow stripe up each side. His

chest was a mass of fur, and tufts of hair wrapped each arm and both legs.

I'm sure my mouth was open because its inside was dry. I looked in his eyes; he was very human, and the hair was real. I wanted to leave very badly. I glanced over at my family and saw little Clarissa gripping Flora tightly with her sticky fingers. Florrie, herself, looked wild-eyed and blank at the same time. She appeared as though searching for something appropriate to say to this creature; something conveying the idea that though he was incredibly ugly, we meant him no harm, and now if you'll excuse us....She, of course, could not find words. Sam, stripped of his fledgling manhood and trail-blazed bravado stood limply with his thumb in the process of making that journey on the well traveled highway from his side to his mouth. He looked very young. My family filed out very quietly, leaving me facing the manmonkey alone.

"How are you?" I asked stupidly.

"I'm doin' just fine," he responded brightly, "You've a fine family!"

"Yes, I...thank you."

My timorousness made it painfully clear that the weight of any conversation was on his hairy shoulders. "Let me tell you something," he offered, "Do you realize about twelve thousand people enter the main gate each and every day of this fair? And do you know you're only the 287th person to come in here and see me? Do you know what that means?" He leaned forward a little; he was very engaging. "That means only about one of every forty people coming to the fair want to come in and stare at me. And some of those don't even want to. Take yourself for example." He had read my face like a book. He had not only read the chapter on how much I didn't want to be there, but also the one on how uneasy I felt being there, how ashamed I felt *paying* to see him. He knew it so he was putting me at ease. "Oh, yeah! I tell ya, just knowing most folks don't want to come on in and look at the ole freak makes me feel gratified. It gives you faith in the human race!" He laughed a bit. The hair hanging from his chin waved at me. "I'm rich, too. Do you realize I make \$150 a day sittin' here? Most carnie people are rich, you

know—and satisfied. Children get forty cents worth of amusement from the rides, the flim-flamers at the games can only take advantage of people who are trying to beat them at their own game.... It's justice! It all works out."

I liked him. I told him so. Then I left.

The barker sat mutely smoking. He knew what he was doing: he was making a man both rich and happy. I gathered my family and answered

Florrie's inquisitive look with a faint "Tell you later." We didn't do the infamous Octopus, after all. We did go straight home. That night I told the children Konga Wild was really a very nice man and the fur was fake. They slept easily. I told Florrie everything. I love her very much. We haven't been to a Missacaw County Fair since.



ON FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Four walls of blue,
Cracked wooden floor,
Nails in the walls
Can't shut the door.

Up overhead,
A single dull light,
Creatures appear—
This isn't right.

Run for my life,
Crawl in the bed,
Hide from the sight,
Covering my head.

Shut my eyes tightly,
let my thoughts drift
To far away places
I should never have left.

It slowly appears,
So clear in my mind:
A lone quiet beach
I'm hoping to find,

My love waiting for me,
A flower to give,
To symbolize us
And the life we will live.

—Sue Beasley

IN THE USA DID MODERN MAN SOME GAUDY PLEASURE DOMES ERECT*

BY JIMMY WELDON

*"Every time you lose,
you die a little."*

—George Allen, head coach,
Washington Redskins

* With apologies to S. T. Coleridge



ILLUSTRATION BY DOUG KNOTTS

Picture, if you can, Red Grange posing in panty hose. Or Walter "Big Train" Johnson hawking dog food. Or even Eddie Rickenbacker, the great barnstormer, performing his daredeviltry in the name of Chuckles Candy. Are Joe Namath, Catfish Hunter, and Evel Knievel different from the aforementioned legends only in terms of the money they command? Or are they symptoms of a disease—a malignancy that threatens to sap the vitality and magic from the sports that thrilled our fathers?

As George Leonard, a literate sportswriter, observed in his article "Games People Should Play," a "culture's sports and games mirror a culture's structure and values." Even Sinologists can't be sure as to what ping-pong reveals about the Chinese character. (However, I strongly suspect that were our Oriental comrades taller, they might be playing tennis.)

As Americans, we must ponder the

evolution, or digression, of big-time sport in the land that spawned the democratic ideal of "fair play." How rife is the cynicism that prompts us to snigger at Grantland Rice's immortal contribution to our heritage, "When the One Great Scorer comes to write against your name, He marks—not that you won or lost—but how you played the game."

The ingenuousness of a younger sporting nation was captured in the familiar Norman Rockwell depiction of a tow-headed kid sneaking a view of the ball game through a knot-hole in the fence. Today, we erect Gargantuan stadia across the country, steel and concrete paens to the deities of Sport. Old Yankee Stadium, "the House that Ruth built," was the ultimate sporting edifice of the Thirties. Presently, we behold (to mention but a few) the sprawling Arrowhead complex in Kansas City, the massive bubble-top arena in Pontiac, Michigan, and the grandest offering to

-AND THEY CALL THEM COLISEUMS, JUST LIKE THE PLACES WHERE THE LIONS USED TO EAT CHRISTIANS...

date—The Louisiana Superdome: ten and one-half acres in the heart of the Crescent City, replete with all imaginable creature comforts, at the mere cost of \$163,000,000. Considering the Cajun Country's sporting legacy, one must wonder if the real purpose of the "Dome" is to stage the world's largest and most elaborate cock-fights.

What has twentieth-century man wrought in his frenetic pursuit of sport? It is not difficult to envision a team of archeologists, a millennium from now, excavating the Orange Bowl, discovering a skull encased in a plastic helmet, and dubbing this extinct form of homo sapiens "Football Man."

In essence, we gamesmen have taken simple forms of athletic endeavors and transmuted them into fine forms of madness. In the beginning ours were simple pursuits, grounded in the physical laws of gravity and essentially structured around the aerial projection of spheroid objects toward designated goals. Today they are an obsessive, even desperate, part of the American Way of Life.

Super-Bowl, Fight of the Century, All-Star Game, Pro-Bowl—finally our senses are numbed. Wait, in that advertisement—was that O.J. Simpson spraying a little Eau de Cologne behind his ears? Could that have been Chrissie Evert's winning smile breaking through a layer of Rapid Shave? The little man on television tells me that Joe Frazier just returned a punt eighty-nine yards for a touchdown. And now he says that Kareem Abdul-Jabbar sank a thirty foot putt on the final hole to win the British Open. And now ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States—Johnny Bench.

Historians say that a fundamental law of evolution states that the final period in any line of development is

marked by grotesqueries and extremes. Lafayette, we are here.

For many, football becomes the worst offender in the wide, wide world of sport. This weekend, a little man in a striped shirt will trot onto the gridiron with a gun. He will then proceed to shoot gentility in the head. "Controlled violence," Saint Vincent of Lombardi called it. Let there be bodily contact: sixty carefully monitored minutes of the highest level of violence tolerated in a civilized society.

And we love every minute of it.

The point here is that we obviously can't indict this game without indicting ourselves. After all, football is actually "our" generation's progeny. Our fathers and their fathers played baseball. They pursued their dreams of Ruth and Gehrig and then headed for home when the last inning was out. Baseball thrived when America was innocent. Its days are numbered.

Why does football, this odd descendant of the venerable game of rugby, possess our culture so totally? Perhaps part of the answer lies in our heritage. Unlike our fathers, we approach games as significant ends in themselves—no longer are they leisurely diversions, at most used only as constant scrutiny of the clock; we must quickly acquire material objects as the offensive team acquires territory. We have begun to believe the jaded credos, "nice guys finish last" and "nothing succeeds like success." Winning is Everything.

The most alarming aspect of our fervid quest is the way in which we worship unbridled violence—all means justify the glorious end. Are we indeed moving toward the futuristic state envisioned in *Rollerball*, where one all-encompassing sport becomes the sole outlet for our hostilities?

I see hope for a turning against this pervasive violence in the lesson of box-

ing. Boxing, for so long the most venerated and violent of man's bloodsports, is now experiencing its death throes. Some observers see the decline of boxing in popular favor as the result of media overexposure. In part, that may be true. However, I prefer to believe that sensitive men could no longer tolerate the calculated mauling—even death—of one man, in the ring, in the name of sport. Football, because of its relative detachment, does not afford us the "advantage" of seeing the bright red blood trickle down the combatant's face and onto his chest. To us fans, number 17 is still something of an automaton. We still can't see his face. Maybe when we can, the war will stop.



THE MOURNING-GO-ROUND

crank up the
steam calliope
to toll the tones
of passing
wrap your night clothes
tightly, for
the wind blows cold

take a seat
on the mourning-go-round
hold tight
for we must
cross the bar
and pass the
vale of tears

come one come all
food and drink
and catharsis
for everyone
t'was a grand affair
we'll all agree
let's go again
next tear
I'm glad it's him
not me.

—Annette Norris



ILLUSTRATION BY NANCY PLAYLE

Business As Usual

FICTION BY PAM SPENCER

As he entered the office, he paused briefly beside the small woodframed mirror to assess his appearance. "Impeccable," he thought to himself somewhat proudly as his eyes moved over the dark suit, white shirt, black narrow tie and finally settled on a rhinestone tie pin that his wife had sent him one Christmas several years ago when he'd first started the business.

He was fascinated by the sudden changes in the stone's reflection that his slightest movement produced. When he turned slightly to the right, a brilliant shaft of light seemed to dart from the tie pin. To the left, and only a

dull glow was emitted. At dead center, the stone seemed scarcely more than a pale speck of dust blotting the perfect blackness of his tie. Every morning before he entered his office, he experimented with the effects of his different movements on the rhinestone reflection. He knew the secretary in the outer room thought this little idiosyncrasy of his a bit peculiar, but he didn't pay her much mind as his thoughts were confined to the crucial business matters awaiting him.

His desk was a myriad of neat piles of notes, folders, documents, letters, and scratch paper. The latter was

derived from old notes, folders, documents, and letters which he carefully cut into three inch squares when he had no further use for them.

Placing his leather briefcase on the floor next to his desk, he seated himself in a wooden, straight-backed chair and turned his attention to the notes to himself dated the day before: "Call Mr. Smith about leaking faucet at 205 Lakeview Terrace." He marked a black X through the note with his magic marker and placed it in the scratch paper drawer to be cut up later. He remembered seeing Mr. Smith at the cafeteria last night and

had settled the matter over dinner. Before reading the next note, he glanced at the fist-size alarm clock which served as a paper weight for the scratch paper. A jagged crack in the crystal bisected the clock's face. He recalled the time he had reached for a piece of scratch paper without looking and had inadvertently toppled the clock. It still worked, however, in spite of the crack, and he vowed to be more careful in the future. Clumsiness was not a part of his nature. Efficiency and expediency were, however, and when he saw that the clock read 8:05 he plucked it from its perch and reset it at 8:00 sharp.

Replacing the clock, he picked up the second note to himself and read: "Start legal proceedings against tenant at 140 Morris Lane—rent 10 days overdue." He frowned, momentarily trying to recall who the tenant at 140 was. He shrugged, X'd through the note, placed it in its drawer and reached for the third note: "Carpenter due at College Inn Tues. for repairs." He placed the note in the third folder in a stack on the far right corner of his desk.

Straightening his tie, he reached for the phone and dialed 322. He drummed his fingers impatiently on his desk as he waited for his secretary to answer. When she didn't answer after three minutes, he slammed the receiver down muttering to himself, "Damn biddy. Probably in the lounge

powdering her wrinkles." He giggled at the thought of it. He stared at the blank wall which seemed to stare back at him, then abruptly stood up, rocking the chair on its hind legs, and grabbed the pile of folders to return them to the file cabinet where they belonged. "The least she could do is some simple filing," he scowled and then chuckled again, still thinking about her dusty wrinkles.

The rest of the day went pretty much as usual—he filed, wrote memos, made out the payroll, and made several calls, none of which were returned. He made a note to himself to fire that secretary tomorrow. It was tough enough being the president of a big firm without having to worry about the inefficiency of expendable employees.

At 5:30 he repacked his briefcase, straightened his already neat desk, and flicked his forefinger at a fleck of dust which had settled on the clock. He was on his way out the door when he heard a familiar voice. "Oh, Mr. Jones?" "How many times have I told you, Lucille..." His voice cracked from the strain of a long day's work. "Oh, sorry, Mr. President," she replied.

"And why must you always dress so...so dull?" he complained. "Surely you can find something other than that white uniform in your wardrobe. Our customers will think we don't pay you enough to keep in style." She smiled

good-naturedly. "I'll see what I can do Mr. President. But now it's time for you to take your medicine." "Oh all right. Come on back into my office." As he accepted the tablets and the paper cup full of water, he decided he might keep Lucille on a bit longer. After all she was pleasant even if she wasn't so efficient. He made a note to scratch the note he had made earlier about firing Lucille.

As he swallowed down the last bit of water, Lucille padded quietly out of his office where she met Betty, another "secretary."

"How is he today?" Betty asked. "About the same," Lucille replied.

He sat alone in the office. It was quitting time, he knew, but he really should make a couple more calls before leaving. A president of a big real estate firm had to utilize every waking hour. But he felt so warm and tingly sitting there staring through the bars of his office window at the sinking sun. He scribbled a note to Lucille to remind him of the calls he needed to make tomorrow. He dragged himself up from his seat, reached for his briefcase and froze as a flash of brilliance hit him between the eyes. He marvelled at the sight of the double reflection of a rhinestone tie pin beaming out at him from a cracked alarm clock.



TURN RIGHT AT THE CORNER OF MY MIND

I crazy crouch in cautious corners,
Unrevel rail, in quietness rant,
Make my mouth a merry mourner,
I'm step-pas seul, an unpaired pant.

Unhot harlot-of-heart-unheated,
Battered blue bosom bartered, bought,
Free thy feet, hard-fountain fleeted,
Toward me turn, dare toss the taut.

—Alex B. McDowell

ON THE DEATH OF ROMANTICISM

Hail to thee, blighted spirit,
Romantic Muse who draws a rasping breath,
The modern age has brought thee early death
And pleading tears move not your silent lips.
What drooling poets praise with sugared lines
The mile-long traffic filling endless lanes,
The noise of cities, supersonic planes
And belching trucks piled high with pulpwood pines,
The blackening clouds that fill once-azure skies,
The ghetto skyline in the setting sun,
The saga of the killer and his gun—
Which "sylvan scene" would they idealize?
Die quickly, Muse, and tarry not to see
Your universe clothed in atrocity.

—Annette Norris

Let's Eat Out and Stay Alive

or

Where to Eat in Auburn

BY VERONICA LANGSETH-VANDERFELLER

About the Author: The Auburn Circle is fortunate at long last to be able to publish the last word on where to eat in Auburn, as pronounced by Mrs. Veronica Langseth-Vanderfeller, a highly respected gourmet and long time resident of the Plains. Mrs. Langseth-Vanderfeller is the author of several publications, the most widely known among them being The Boone's Farm Connoisseur, Crumpet Canning In The South, and Culinary Delights I Have Known. At present she is writing a collection of her memoirs, to be entitled Food and Me and tentatively scheduled for publication by the AU Extension Service on April first.

I really do believe the AU students are just the luckiest creatures on earth. They have such wonderful cultural ad-

vantages on their idyllic little pastoral campus. Think of it: Allen Funt, George Wallace, Christine Jorgenson, Vince Vance and the Valiants, Mindo the Magnificent, Muhammed Ali, and The Harlem Globetrotters—all the intellectual giants of our time have passed through the Loveliest Village of the Plains at one time or another. No less exhilarating are the gastronomical delights that bedazzle Auburnites. From the exciting War D'eagle Restaurant to the lowliest hamburger cafe, Auburn students can enjoy an endless variety of excellent cuisines.

Why not start at the top and work down my list of eateries in what the *Circle* editors and I have agreed to call a "trash can survey," using a familiar item on the local scene as a quaint token of my expert opinion of each establishment's relative merits.

The War D'eagle Restaurant



How kind of the Auburn Union to provide the campus with such a fine establishment. And how wise of the administration to assure the healthy nourishment of its co-eds by encouraging them with compulsory meal plans. The folks at the War D'eagle obviously take their sacred trust to heart: personal service is their watchword. You aren't just another number there. If you aren't sure just exactly what you want, then the War D'eagle is the place to go—the student chefs there delight in deliberating with you, and special orders are encouraged.

For less than the cost of filet mignon at home you can walk out of the War D'eagle feeling quite satiated. The War D'eagle is one of the few places



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CUMMINGS

left in Auburn where food is still cooked in pure, unadulterated animal fat, lending to all its cuisine that rugged "down home" quality and overall nondescript flavor which all true Southerners cherish.

For spice, the War D'eagle Restaurant offers an exclusive in the famous scramble system. It's one for all and all for one at the War D'eagle—faculty members, students, and B&G men alike convivially scramble together for their just desserts. Students particularly seem to enjoy the sporting possibilities of the "scram." Did your history prof give you a bad deal on that test after you stayed up all night studying? Accidents do happen at the War D'eagle.

Another exciting feature of the War D'eagle are the special festivities it occasionally stages for jaded campus palates. My favorite was the KKK night when the tables were decorated with miniature burning crosses and waitresses dressed in white sheet costumes served fried chicken and cornbread. Vive la War D'eagle!

The Heart Burn of Auburn



For contrast you may enjoy the quietly intellectual atmosphere of the Heart Burn of Auburn's perpetual fifty-five degree climate. Located directly across from Funchest Hall on College Street, the Heart Burn caters mainly to the academic appetite. The specialized menu is worthy of more than casual attention because it features such culinary oddities as

mashed potatoes, black-eyed peas, and green beans. Since the cooks do not like to serve their dishes too hot, you may have to wait for the cook to prepare your "special" order, but while your food is cooling off you are entertained. The Heart Burn supplies a peg-board game on every table to tease those healthy cerebral appetites. It is rumored that one Funchest professor, after many hours of struggling, actually reduced the number of pegs on his board to an all-time low of six.

The last time I went to the Heart Burn, I ate my special favorite, a beef patty with vegetables #1, #4, and #7, as one of the lovely Heart Burn waitresses vacuumed the rug under my table. (They don't stand on pretentious formality at the Heart Burn.)

Western Scorcher



For authentic western flavor, nothing surpasses the Western Scorcher, where eager eaters are herded through the ultimate in efficient dining. The confusion of restaurant dining is minimized as the welcomed patron is given a guest number upon ordering, and each menu item (featuring everything from beef to beef) is likewise enumerated to eliminate kitchen guesswork. The scrumptious buffet which offers lettuce and jello pudding can be just too tempting; however, a system of itemized billing kindly inhibits the excited gourmet from snapping up unnecessary margarine, crackers, or forks.

BULLETIN: Shortly before this issue went to press, the *Circle* learned that Mrs. Langseth-Vanderfeller will appear in Jay & Em Bookstore on Christmas Eve to autograph copies of her latest book. As an added bonus, the Alumni Association announced that the first five hundred people contributing \$1.00 or more to the Slug Jerdan scholarship fund will receive a free copy of this issue of the *Circle*, complete with a special signed foldout of Veronica herself. For further information, contact the Alumni Association Office.

As one stands with tray in hand waiting for a table to empty in the popular Scorcher, the eyes wander, searching for the key to that famous Scorcher mood. Could it be the spotlights mounted on attractive beige rain gutters which lend that homey effect? Perhaps the french fry encrusted walls!

Also of particular note is the melodic and unending drawl of the waitress-hostess-master of ceremonies as she calls out the numbers of the customers, adding a uniquely dramatic, if not anticipatory, flair to dining at the Scorcher. What could be more exciting than listening with breathless expectancy as the numbers come closer and closer to your own! And what could be more entertaining than watching fellow cafeteria patrons wave, jump



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID CUMMINGS

up and down, and scream frantically as their numbers are called? Finally the meal arrives, and one is then given that final Scorcher extra: to eliminate the usual last minute fret of forgetting to tip, the waitress subtly slips her catsup-covered calling card complete with the friendly "thank-you" on the table along with your cooked-to-order meal. The waitress then disappears, never to be seen again, so that you may dine and suck ice in utter peace. All in all, the best in 20th Century dining.

The Orange Roll



One's impression upon entering The Orange Roll is one of high excitement and beehive-like activity. The decor leaps with color and is almost distracting to the serious connoisseur. But don't be misled. To truly savor a meal at the Roll you must "get into" the atmosphere. Take your time; the management is in no hurry. A Roll specialty certainly worth mentioning is their marvelous cold beans and franks. The cook lightly passes the beans and franks under the broiler to give them that delicate almost-warm effect.

The Tiger Club



For the civic-minded connoisseur, the Tiger Club offers a tastefully political atmosphere. Because of its small kitchen and staff, the Tiger menu is limited, but by keeping its menu

small, the Tiger Club has managed to reach its pinnacle of never-to-be duplicated flavor. Its famous barbecue, topped with an aggressive orange gravy, is pleasingly complemented with mounds of the Tiger Club's own dinner rolls, made from a secret recipe, then aged to perfection.

Nomorrison's



Got a few hours to kill on Sunday afternoon? Step into line at Nomorrison's and you'll soon be shouting "no more" along with the other patrons. Ah, but be of good cheer, for the management has provided tasteful diversions for customers who wait in the corridors of the magnificent Nomorrison's mile-long maze: At strategically placed points along the way, one is actually allowed to peep into the dining area.

But such a privilege only serves to make one hungrier, you say? Mais oui! However, that is only part of the purpose. The tasteful management is also insuring that the diners near the viewing area conduct themselves well: After all, one is certain to follow the rules of etiquette when all those hungry people are watching every bite!

When at long last the light dawns at the end of the tunnel, one realizes that the wait was well worthwhile. A veritable cornucopia of mouth-watering morsels lies ahead, and the excitement is multiplied by the chan-

ting of the white-clad chefs as they whisk you along. No time for deliberations at Nomorrison's!

When you finally arrive breathless to your table, you are left to dine in peace from the myriad of tiny bowls which lie before you. What, no butter? But, my dear, you forgot to ask! Not to worry, you see, for the waitress will be more than happy to bring an extra pat and add the 79¢ to your bill. Now enjoy your meal, but remember, you are being watched!

The Voomlette Shoppe



When you're desperate (and I mean desperate) for a late night snack, Auburn is loaded with possibilities, the first and last being the Voomlette Shoppe. There, attractive waitresses are eager to meet your every need.

One of the few decent late night places left in this age of "fast food for a quick buck" where the customer is always right, the Voomlette Shoppe dabbles in old world tradition. Where else can the waitresses take your order, serve your food, and receive her reward without leaving the kitchen?

My special favorite at the Voomlette Shoppe is the Olde Tennis Shoe Omelette, cooked to perfection with their own "secret grease" which permeates even the water there. Along with the omelette I always ask for their shoe string potatoes, but there's no sock when the check comes. Prices are oh, so reasonable! at the Voomlette Shoppe.



The Pewter Kettle



Anyone passing through downtown Auburn cannot help but notice the charm and appeal of the Pewter Kettle, located in the heart of the Loveliest Village. Spacious and antiseptic, the Pewter Kettle has specialized in fast and friendly service almost as long as the Samford bell tower has graced our vista. A customer at the Pewter Kettle is able to "rub elbows" with the elite of Auburn's downtown business district, as well as an occasional refugee from the bus station.

The Kettle's delectable hamburgers (affectionately called the "pewt-burger") has baffled gourmet palates for years. The composition of this special concoction is a closely guarded secret. I have my own theory, and I am suspicious of the large green dumpster in the street directly to the right of the Pewter Kettle. Also worth mentioning is their famous deep-fat-fried chili, stirred up fresh daily. A well-equipped kitchen and satisfied staff makes for quick and tasty meals at the Pewter Kettle.

Raskin-Bobbins



Who wants ice cream? At Raskin-Bobbins you'll want to taste all five hundred and eighty-four flavors, including red beans and rice, boysenberry au gratin, catsup in the

rye, and the new green pea ice cream (introduced in keeping with this month's "Exorcist" theme). But don't overdo it; the price isn't the only thing that's rich. You may end up with a tummy ache. My special favorite is a float made with asparagus ice and the ever popular mau-mau punch.

These are just a few of the restaurants in Auburn that didn't rate in our trash can slurvey, but are nonetheless worth mentioning...

What's the greatest thing since the potato famine? It's Auburn's new Irish restaurant *McDoogles*. Featuring the latest in pre-fab food and decor, the word for *McDoogles* is Enchanting...Have it their way at *Herdees*. Their famous grit burgers are unrivaled...At *Burger Monarch* you can have a quadruple meat whomper for only \$5.87. It's a carnivore's delight with real meat and not a speck of cereal...For authentic I-talian pizza it's *Rubellos*. Dine in or call out. I prefer the real continental atmosphere that its plush dining area affords. If you like your pizza cold, *Rubellos* features two-hour delivery (to your door) in their quaint open air trucks...How many *Greastyl* burgers can you get in your mouth at once? Don't O.D. (overdo) as we say in cooking class. Greastyls are positively habit forming!

Cramco



If you don't want to bother with any semblance of the restaurant scene,

there's a Cramco machine in every nook and cranny of the Auburn campus. Always fresh, Cramco's generous portions and low prices make dining in a real restaurant passe. Instead of hassling with temperamental waiters and waitresses, you can play "slick Vegas gambler" with the temperamental Cramco one-armed bandits. In the attractive Haley Center lounge an army of eager "bandits" will literally bedazzle you with alternatives to a well-balanced snack (or meal if you dare). I enjoy a cup of the scalding hot Cramco chocolate water when I want an extra special treat.

And there you have it, our trashcan slurvey, volume one, number one; though the list is admittedly incomplete, I hope it will be of aid to the seventeen thousand budding gourmets who grace the Auburn campus. Perhaps your favorite restaurant was not rated? You needn't be upset. As soon as my stomach recuperates and I fight yet another battle of the bulge in the ever-expanding efforts to retain my girlish figure (we professionals have a harder time than you think), perhaps the *Circle* staff and I can collaborate on yet another culinary milestone—taking on, with fork in hand, the remainder of the eateries in Auburn. To the many fine establishments not mentioned in our slurvey, I offer this word of consolation: Never fear, your time will come. Until then, Auburn, happy eating!



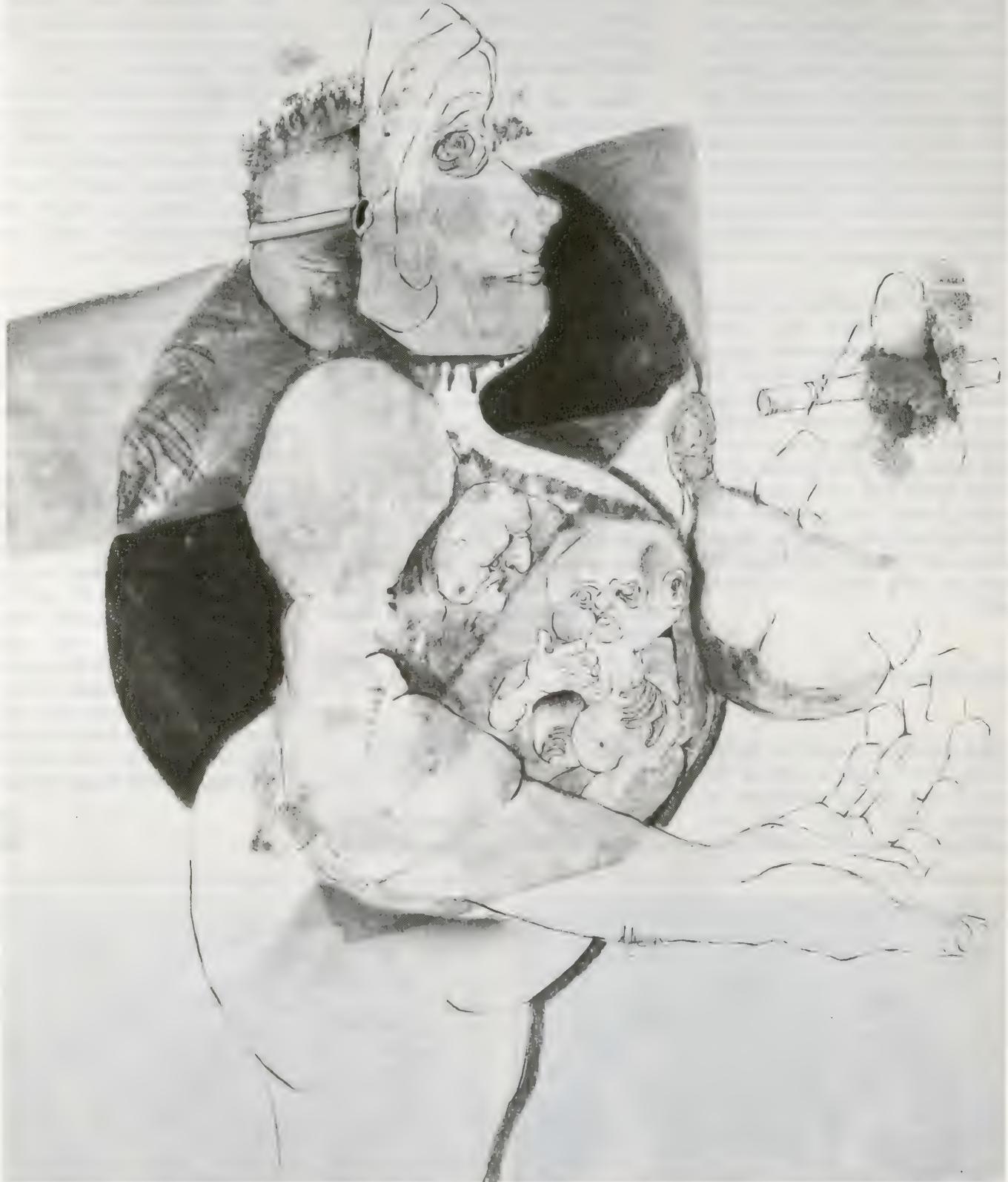


ILLUSTRATION BY TOM NELIGAN

The Homecoming

BY BARBARA BALL

I am sitting on the stool in the corner by the refrigerator in the kitchen of my parents' house—this stool in this womb-like corner where I used to take refuge, sustained by handfuls of cookies, from the daily rack of grammar school and junior high. The heating vent is here in this corner, and I drop my shoes to the floor and warm my chilled feet next to it. The warmth begins to envelop my body, and I feel a certain security, some little, evanescent sense of foundness. I watch my mother move about heavily, preparing supper. She pauses, distracted, in the middle of the room, glancing about at what is undone. I know her glance takes in, too, the loose undone pieces of her existence—and still she pauses, unable to make a thing stop or change course. She runs her hand through her cropped, curly mop of hair, a gesture of frustration which I have seen and felt many times when I've turned, in another place, to think of home. The gesture is a small symbol of why I decided to leave: I would go and do; I would have no passing fragments of living not making a whole—I would not be trapped and feeding my frustration at fifty-five. She is unaware of what she does; she is fixing supper.

My hands feel heavy in my lap. I am not to help with the preparing of the meal: I am to make myself comfortable and talk to her, to tell her what I've been doing, and whether I am happy. I make a half-formed pieces of a monologue, then fall silent. I am too detached from this scene, watching my mother, to be a participant in it by conversation.

I have come home this time looking for a sort of refuge—a breathing-space in which I can look at myself, and perhaps find the center of me. A sort of

step back to gather momentum for going forward . . . I will go forward, perhaps this is not the place for doing that, for renewing oneself; I wonder if there is tooo much of frustration and inertia here. But it is home.

My father enters—curious, how distanced a child becomes, until the appearance of a parent is signaled by a kind of stage direction in the child's head. He is more stoop-shouldered now than when I left; his hair has more gray. My parents greet briefly, perfunctorily, with a touch that does not warm. He catches sight of me in my corner and crosses the room, his eyes awakened. He hugs me almost fiercely, and I know suddenly that my homecoming is to him—to both of them—a bringing of life to this house. I withdraw, in fear for the fragileness of myself, and become, again, an observer.

Supper is placed on the table, and an extra chair is brought for me. My father clowns now, for me and because of the monotony-breaking of my being here, his child in his home. He builds a towering hamburger with elaborate care, pickles, tomatoes, lettuce, cheese, relish, onions, and conspicuous flourishes, and I chuckle . . . And then become a watcher who hurts, wearily, because of what I see—the boy who built sky-castles is a man who builds Dagwood sandwiches.

My father's exaggerated, rumbling burps, and his own twinkling response, "What was that last word?" draw a censuring "Duncan!" from my mother, but I discern a small, fugitive—hopeful?—smile which lights briefly behind the word. My father does not notice the smile; he is irked by her word. But to recapture my cheerfulness, halfborn with his clowning, he seizes his paper napkin and fashions a doll, drawing eyes and a grin on its

puffy face. He offers it to me and I take it, somewhat warily, wondering why he gives me a doll; is it a gift for his little girl? God, I'm getting tired of this detached omniscience. I smile, though, to try, in return, to warm him. He smiles back. My mother smiles at us both, tentatively and a little puzzledly. It comes to me that this moment, this fragile bubble in which we three smile at each other, from our diverse and cloudy impulses, is an astonishing thing, not to be thrown away. The glass of my detachment has cracked a little, and I want to give them something.

"My job is going well—I like it," I falter. "My boss has been encouraging about a proposal I wrote for a new series of programs. They're to feature, and be produced by, the people of the various communities of the city—the Blacks, the Chinese, the sub-culture of the young—"

My parents look puzzled.

"—The 'hippies,'" I say after a pause, using an overused and obsolete word which for my parents has meaning; it is a word which conjures up for them a mental picture, and will suffice. "I think it will be interesting."

Their faces say they are pleased for me, because I have created something and have been successful, and because I seem happy about it. They smile because of this, because they are my parents; I wonder if they will ever watch those television programs, or if their curiosity stops with that which is within their own gates.

"Do you like your new apartment? Do you know the people around you?" my mother queries. "I worry sometimes that you are isolated there in the city, that no one knows you—lonely in the midst of a crowd, you know."

I cannot tell her that I am lonely, that it becomes harder to reach out and touch another human being, and harder still to be in touch with myself . . . Curious, that a self can be disconnected from itself—almost paradoxical . . .

"Yes, I like my apartment—I've put up my paintings, and filled the shelves with my books—the place looks like me now. Oh, I bought a canary! He's delightful—wakes me up in the morning, singing to the pigeons on the window-ledge. He bursts into song whenever I turn on the TV—it's funny to hear him compete with Walter Cronkite. My landlady is either charmed by his arias or is somewhat deaf; she's a crotchety sort and I'm not sure what she'll do if she finds him. And I suspect she goes exploring in the apartments, though what she expects to find in mine, I don't know!"

My parents are laughing at the runon monologue. I smile with them, keeping distance from the tightness inside me. I share warily, for my parents want to feel secure in knowing that I am happy—for my sake, and, I realize, for theirs.

"Please don't worry, Mother. I have friends. The girl next door is feeding my canary while I'm gone."

And the irony of what I have said rebounds in my mind: That constitutes a friend?

"I meet a lot of interesting people through work."

"Do you know any interesting young

men?" my mother inquires, a little pointedly, anxious, as always, of my "woman's needs" and of the horrifying possibility of my permanent spinsterhood.

"Ah, Mother, please—don't be selecting bridesmaids' gown colors." I smile lightly, but the words grated against and shook somewhat the fragile structure of our conversation. She looks disconcerted.

"I'm not ready to be tied down yet."

"You're twenty-six," she mutters.

The edges of the little warmth we had are fraying, and I try to mend them with reassurances.

"I have fun, and good conversation—I have companionship. I had a date to see a very good play last week, a new staging of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*."

"Oh? What's it about?"

"It's about a woman who's treated like a doll, like a pretty caged bird, by her husband. She comes to realize, though that she doesn't really have her own existence, that she's not really a person in this marriage—"

My words have come rushing with their intensity, startling me. I stop now, because my mother's tired blue eyes look perplexed, wanting to understand this feeling that shows in her child's words, but not grasping the words. I bite my lip and my hands pick at the wool of my skirt.

"It's very good . . . She gets trapped in a situation in which she cannot tell her husband, who is a very honorable,

but somewhat priggish, man about a fraud she has committed out of love for him."

My mother smiles; I have told her what the play was about. I pull in my breath, though, because this latter description was a cop-out, a lame offering to conversation.

We are silent. My mother finishes her lemon pie, and I collect crumbs of the graham-cracker crust with the flat of the tines of my fork. Her question about the men I know has touched close on my loneliness, and I sink back in upon myself, my mind turning with its soreness. And my emptiness expands.

"Why don't we clear the table?" asks my father, and begins to put tops on jars.

I stand, glad of something to do, and reach for the milk carton. My mother looks up at me; her eyes are troubled and questioning. They probe around the edges of my walls; they say, "I am your mother? What's wrong?" I chew on my lip and stack a cup and saucer on a plate.

"Mother—"

"Yes?"

"I think I'll turn in soon. It was a long drive from the city."

I bend and kiss her cheek, an offering in place of myself. They are my parents, but I am not, any longer, alas, their child.



I SAID I LOVE YOU

I said I love you
And you rubbed your calloused finger
Against the dust on the windowsill
You blew softly and each particle scattered
An illusion

—Christy Hudgins

the leaves dragged me with them
as they fell
gold and ruby
(an occasional rare emerald)
i lay buried
unlike rameses II
under the magic trove

—Tracy Lea

MERCY EARTH

Dawn is a sun of smoky quartz,
weary in a stony sky, infirm and rude.
An imperial stallion is crossing the stone bridge—
there are crystals of snow in the air.

But wild dogs are night-dead in the marsh
at the foot of the hill—
and on the wide, violent plain,
the whirling water has gone;
men eat mercy earth, sterile and kind.

The weary dying are silent and cold; but
there are fires on the horizon, barely seen.

—Christopher Ackerman

MORNING SONG

Pull out of the warm sack
Into the chilly morning air.
Warmth is certainly life's lack,
Especially for this flesh so bare—
Though a lover's touch
Can sometimes do rather much.

—Percy Jones



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BRADFORD

THE AMERICAN TRIP IN MEXICO: A Word of Caution

BY RICHARD SNOW

For six months Nathan has lived in Santa Rosa, a village on the western coast of Mexico. His life has a relaxed and predictable pattern. He wakes up early, usually before dawn, and meditates in the tent pitched in the backyard behind his cabin. When the sun is high enough to warm the beach, he walks down close to the ocean and does yoga exercises. Afterwards he goes for a swim then returns to his cabin for a breakfast of fresh fruit: mangos, bananas, oranges, or cantaloupe. After breakfast he may visit his Mexican friends in a local restaurant or hike down the miles of deserted beach in either direction from Santa Rosa. If his stock of food is getting low, he may gather free coconuts in one of the large groves nearby, or he can catch the primitive open-sided bus which goes once a day to and from the nearest market town, twenty miles away.

In Santa Rosa Nathan has found the idyllic existence in Mexico which many of his fellow countrymen are seeking. With soaring prices in Europe and the loss of cheap trans-Atlantic airfares, young Americans like Nathan on limited budgets are increasingly turning from the traditional European pilgrimage to less expensive and often longer vacations in Mexico. Numerous reasons besides economy bring them south. The quickening interest in the

pre-Columbian Indians attracts visitors to the ruins scattered through the country. The books of Carlos Castenada have popularized the mysterious powers and drugs of the Mexican *curanderos* (healers). Many, like Nathan, hope to escape the hectic, technocratic life of the United States by finding some remote spot in Mexico where things are simpler, more fundamental.

They cross the border wearing blue jeans and work shirts, carrying backpacks and sleeping bags. They search for the best bargains in Indian handicrafts and flood into "undiscovered" villages on the coasts or in the mountains. Many sample the wide array of drugs, from peyote to marijuana cookies to the more conventional but no less debilitating tequila. A few speak fluent Spanish, but more often they survive with a slight or non-existent command of the language. When they can afford it they travel in vans, sharing the high price of gasoline. A few intrepid individuals hitchhike, but the most popular modes of transportation are by bus and by train, with tickets costing about half what they do north of the border.

No matter how they get from place to place, whether alone or in groups, young Americans encounter a different way of life. Location, health, associates, mood, and personality all contribute to the traveler's reaction to Mexico and its people. Some visitors, like Nathan, possess an uncanny knack

for fitting into a foreign environment without sacrificing their own style of life. Others are so flexible that they quickly adjust to the different conditions, discarding with ease their conflicting American values. Still others find the rigors of adjustment too demanding. They spend their vacations strictly in the company of fellow countrymen, swapping tales of Mexican backwardness; complaining of food, prices, and sickness; and condemning the mercenary attitudes of Mexican merchants.

The experiences of three young Californians indicate the importance of personality and mood to the quality of the Mexican vacation. Autumn, Alice, and Maria, all in their early twenties, came south together from Los Angeles. Like many of their compatriots, they were traveling light, both materially and financially. By camping whenever possible and by living on a tight budget they hoped to spend two months on their trip. But after almost a month together the trio broke up. Despite their shared experiences, Autumn and Alice's attitudes toward Mexico were quite different from Maria's.

Autumn and Alice have become fatalistic and cynical about their vacation. In a sidewalk cafe in Oaxaca they sip coffee and describe a few of their adventures. Autumn is the more vocal of the two, nervously pulling a hand through her long blonde hair while she talks: "We split up from Maria in

Zihuatanajo. She was going to live with this Mexican family. She really liked the father, Pancho, and she stayed around his restaurant all the time. He told Maria she could leave her pack in the restaurant so she wouldn't have to carry it with her around town, and eventually he invited her to share a room with a couple of kids. It wasn't a sexual thing. The whole family, Pancho's wife too, just sort of adopted Maria." Autumn pauses to exchange greetings with a passing American friend, and Alice continues the story. Although quieter than her companion, she talks with the self-assurance of someone who has lived her entire life in California, in the vanguard of America's cultural development: "The three of us had been camping on a beach near Zihuatanajo, but we were tired of these Mexican guys hanging around all the time. So when Maria wanted to live at Pancho's we decided to head south. We weren't mad or anything, we just went different ways."

The two women were searching for that elusive spot of tranquility that is the goal of so many young Americans in Mexico. Their quest took them down Mexico's western coast to Acapulco, then Puerto Escondido, and eventually to Puerto Angel, where they finally found a beach that tourism had not yet despoiled. They rented a small hut on the beach and set up housekeeping, spending their days swimming, reading, and lying in the sun. A fellow American they had met earlier arrived and rented a hut next to theirs.

Soon, however, the reality of Mexico overtook them again. As news of their presence spread, curious or romantically-inclined men appeared to offer their "help" with the tasks of living on the beach. Did the young women need someone to gather coconuts? Would they like some fresh fish? Their lives must be very boring, wouldn't they like to go to the dance in the village next Saturday?

Autumn shakes her head ruefully. "We went to Puerto Angel to relax and get away from hassles. But what happened? We were hassled worse there than anywhere else." Finally their attempt to live undisturbed on the beach attracted visitors of a

different type. While the two women were asleep one night, two thieves slipped into their hut and went through their packs, taking their travelers checks and some valuable camping equipment. A similar fate befell their friend in the neighboring hut. He awoke while the theft was in process, but having already been robbed once at knife point in Mexico, he remained mute in his sleeping bag while the thieves silently relieved him of his traveler's checks, cash, and passport.

The young man decided his vacation was simply too traumatic. As soon as he had reclaimed his stolen traveler's checks, he headed for home on the first available plane. "What would you do," asks Autumn indignantly, "if you had been robbed not once, but twice, one time at knife point?" You can't blame him for not thinking too much of Mexico."

Rather than follow the example of their fellow victim, Alice and Autumn journeyed to Oaxaca, a city high in the southern mountains, one of the main points of interest for young travelers because of its heavy Indian influence and because of the ready availability of drugs in the area. Alice and Autumn now spend their days in the company of other Americans, sitting in sidewalk cafes discussing life in the United States or the shortcomings of the people and customs of Mexico. Their most bitter complaints are directed not against Mexican thieves—they both admit that theft "could have happened in California"—but at the endless sexual overtures of Mexican men. "I'm sick of this *macho* act," Alice notes with disgust. "I can't even sit in a public place without some guy coming over and trying to convince me that he's the king of Mexican lovers." Autumn nods her head in agreement and adds, "The only way to get away from them is to hang around with American guys all the time." When the two travel, they prefer late-night buses that are usually crowded. "We sit together and pile our packs and gear around us like we're in a fort. Maybe the Mexican men will get the hint." After a few more days in Oaxaca, Alice and Autumn will begin their homeward trip. They have no intention of ever returning to Mexico.

While the experiences of Autumn and Alice have been overwhelmingly unpleasant, those of their friend Maria have been just as overwhelmingly pleasant. The three women met in Oaxaca and discovered that their attitudes were totally opposed. After two months in Mexico, Maria is in love with the country, its customs, its food, and its people. She wanders through the panorama of the market in Oaxaca and pauses frequently to examine beautiful hand-made blouses, dazzling flowers, or hand-woven Indian blankets with their vivid designs. She usually engages in brief conversations with the vendors, warming them with her bright, honest smiles. Moving down a street where fruit is sold, she repeatedly stops to buy small samples of the unknown and exotic fruits from Indian women sitting on the sidewalk. "When people tell me about the bad things happening down here, about all the hassles, I wonder why their trip is so different from mine." Her freckled face breaking into a smile of wonderment, she makes a sweeping motion with her arm. "Why can't they just open their eyes and realize how incredible all this is?"

Maria's approach to the cultural realities of Mexico differs sharply from that of her friends. She views the Mexican curiosity and friendliness as educational opportunities rather than as intrusions on her privacy. She tries to take advantage of chances to get involved in the commonplace existence of people she meets. Maria has turned one year's study of Spanish into a basic but functional fluency.

She has dealt with the problem of over-enthusiastic suitors by choosing as carefully as possible one Mexican male whom she can depend upon as a companion. By selecting her companion with discretion, she has been able to reap numerous benefits without actually having to grant sexual favors. The relationship with the restaurant owner, Pancho, is a perfect example of her hardheaded but effective method. Pancho sees Maria not as a lover but as a daughter. Yet despite the non-sexual relationship, Pancho's presence insures that Maria will not have to fend off a

host of ardent youths hoping to bed down with a supposedly uninhibited American. Maria deepens her understanding of Mexican life through her contact with Pancho and his family, yet she avoids the sexual considerations that usually dominate relationships between Mexican men and young American women.

Maria's trip to Mexico has opened for her a new range of opportunity and interest. Earlier she had dropped out of UCLA after her second year. For almost two years she was out of school working at a variety of jobs in Los Angeles and San Francisco. She saved the money for her vacation from tips she made as a waitress at a fashionable restaurant in Los Angeles. Now she wants to go back to UCLA—to study the history and political system of Mexico. "There's so much I want to know about this country, like how the political system affects the everyday lives of people like Pancho and his family." After she finishes her studies, Maria wants to live and work in Mex-

ico. "I love it here. This is my new home."

Maria's enthusiasm contrasts sharply with the disillusionment of Autumn and Alice. Yet both experiences constitute part of the reality of travel in Mexico. Every traveling American has a story of some petty swindle, of the theft of a valuable possession, of the notorious greed and corruption of police and officials. But just as common are the stories of Mexican generosity, of invitations into homes, of personal openness which puts to shame contemporary Americans with their fear and suspicion.

Mexico is a country which produces a strong reaction from most visitors. Despite the inroads of American technology and ideas, the culture still demands drastic adjustments from someone accustomed to punctuality, the appearance of antiseptic cleanliness, and a semblance of governmental efficiency. The customs regarding women are quite different from those in the United States.

Relative freedom for females, not to even mention women's liberation, is unheard of in most areas. No matter what brings the traveler to Mexico, whether it is to live as long as possible without working, to learn Spanish, or to visit Indian ruins, some sort of compromise is necessary between conflicting American and Mexican values. As more and more young Americans return from Mexico with tales of happiness or woe, we hope that prospective travelers will become aware of the compromises which are necessary. Forewarned, they will approach their Mexican vacation not as a retreat from American complexity into a Latin-flavored "state of nature," but rather as a movement from one developed and complex culture into a different culture, just as complex, with the same potential for disappointment and reward.



JUST BECAUSE (Tale of an Unyielding Urban Fighter)

no blue air and no clouds
tell me i am here
so i will cough on your window
to create a fog you cannot see through
there is no need to ask me why i want to hinder you
do not remind me of those black faces behind your Buick
or i might knife my father's heart out
while he is drinking on the sofa
(and you would not want that)

skycenters yawn into the smog
reminding me that i am alive
(what a lie)
and i notice new pictures hanging on your walls
about how nostalgic it is to be old
do not tell me that i must pay the price you greed for
when i can steal you just as easy
you need not remind me of people you cannot understand
or i might do something to hurt you . . .

like kill you
like rape you
or remind you of yourself

—Joseph Cotten

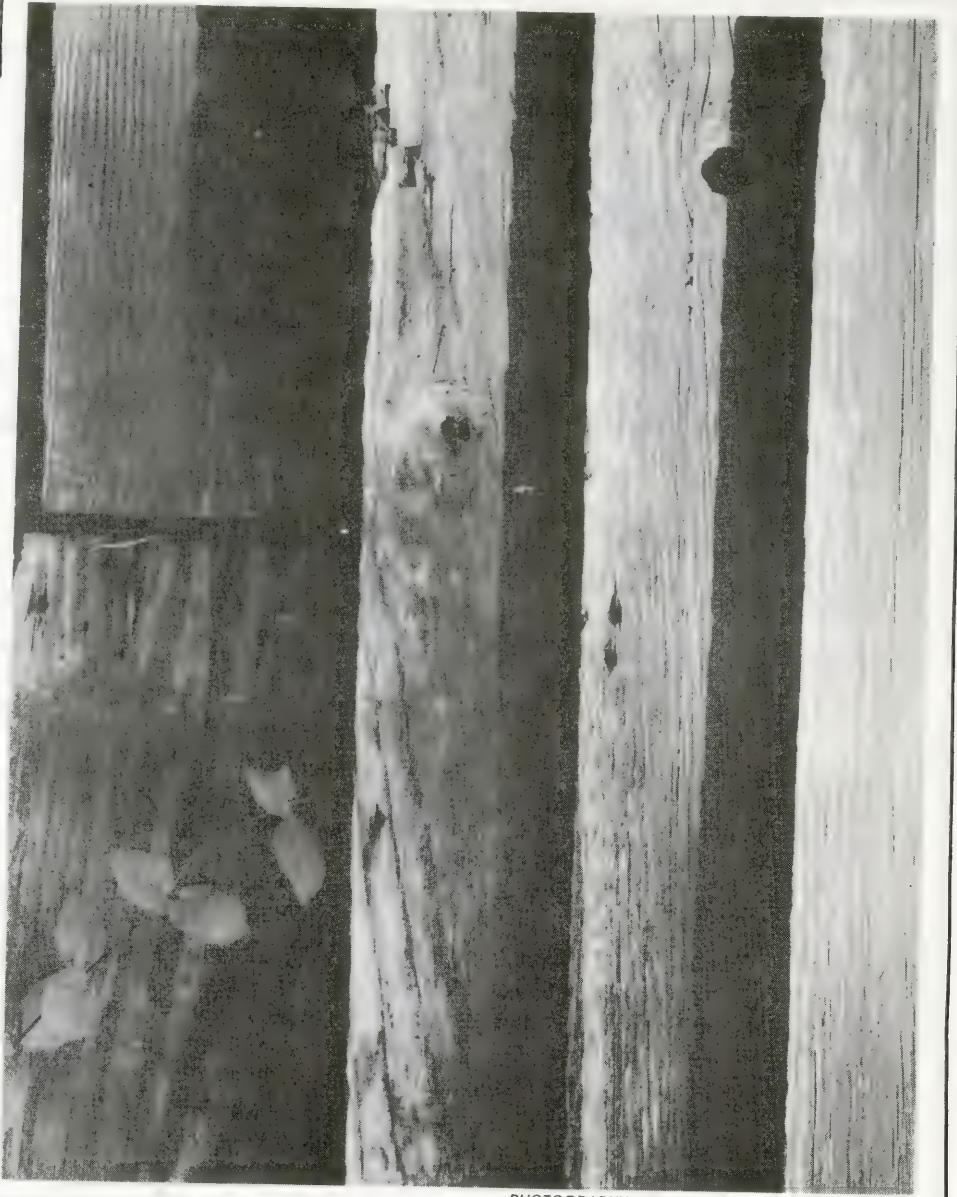
ISTANBUL

Delicate and grey
like ancient filigree
she lifts a million minarets
thin, hungry hands
of a multitude.

Her tresses of golden hay
are left behind,
twisting lazy braids
in the sun.

And now
lascivious bellydancer
she daintily lifts her sooty skirts
to poise a silver-slipped foot
on another continent.

—Heleni Pedersoli



PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM P. WHITE, JR., ©1975

NOT NOTHING

I could have stood something,
But not nothing.
Something like loud cries
And sobs and torn curtains
And flung skewers of shishkabobs
And grief prowling around the room,
But the urge
That got caught in the door,
Lost in the mail,
Refused funds, pigeon-holed,
That went back to sleep
Before even rolling over,
It never occurred to me
It could pound forever.

—Martha Duggar

SHINE ME

Shine
Warm me
Smile me into you
Far past yourself
Touch me into a star
Make me bright
I shall reflect the flames of the sky, and you will follow.

Our intensity shall surpass the sun's.
Brighter yet.

—Jackie Neeley



WYDSC Ws mewgll

ILLUSTRATION BY DONICA CREALY

Court is Strictly Business

FICTION BY MARIAN MOTLEY

Once I heard Miss Biber, my old maid first grade teacher, tell the other first grade teacher, Mrs. House, that she thought it was a disgrace that a child the age of Hallelujah Jernigan was allowed to listen to the goings on in a Justice of the Peace Court. I guess Miss Biber knew that I learned a lot more about life sitting on the kitchen hearth every Saturday morning listening to real life stories come and go than I learned in a whole week listening to her at school. I learned about rape before any of my classmates at Cotton-town Elementary heard about the birds and the bees. My Daddy had to try a colored boy named T.R. Jackson for allegedly raping one of the colored girls in the quarter. When Daddy found out how many times T.R. hadn't had to rape the girl, he threw the case out and just shook his head slowly back and forth when T.R. and the girl left court together like the word "rape" had never crossed their minds.

I especially remember one Saturday morning during the summer between the first and second grades. Mama had run me outside so she could clean the house, and I had just taken a seat on the back doorsteps to wait for court when an old Chevrolet stopped in front of our house. A woman wearing a skirt that came down below her knees got out. All her hair was pulled straight back from her face and pinned up in a knot on the back of her head—she was what Mama called a "scrubbed-looking" woman. She was holding the hand of a little blond-haired boy who wore a suit and tie. The two of them started toward the front door, but I ran out to meet them, figuring they had something to do with court since I didn't know them, and led them around to the kitchen door. I noticed that the woman didn't shave her legs and wondered if she would still be classified as "scrubbed." Even more

important, I recognized that the little boy with her was "Little Joseph," the six-year-old preacher whose picture I had seen in the newspaper.

Mama invited the woman and Little Joseph to come in, but stopped me on the top doorstep with a frown and told me to play outside during court today. I sat back down, afraid that if I aggravated Daddy by arguing, he wouldn't take me to see Digger Donahue that afternoon. Digger was locally famous for getting buried for a cause. He would stay buried for weeks in a special casket that let air and food in, and Daddy had promised that if I saved up the twenty-five cents it cost to see him, he would take me after lunch. I could hardly sit still, though. I was angry and disappointed that I had been shut out of court, and I was dying to ask Mama if Little Joseph and his mother were Holy-Rollers or something—but I just sat there counting my twenty-five cents, pressing a penny up and down my leg until I had a whole line of Abraham Lincoln silhouettes on it.

Soon a pick-up truck with bumper stickers stuck all over the cab pulled up behind the old Chevrolet and stopped. Before he even got out, I knew that Stumpy Nolan was behind the wheel of that truck, probably already out campaigning for another race. Daddy said Stumpy had run for some office every election for the last twenty-six years, but had only won one minor office, and that was by default. Not very many people liked Stumpy. He was less than five feet tall; he had a real red face from drinking so much, and he didn't seem to have a neck at all. His head seemed to be attached to his blocky little body by his bowtie, like Humpty-Dumpty sitting on the wall. His looks weren't what people held against him though. The main complaint against Stumpy was his cam-

paign gimmicks. He didn't hold barbeques or gospel singings like most politicians. Stumpy did things like running naked through cafes and urinating on street corners for publicity. I wondered what he was doing at our house now—probably just out campaigning door-to-door, telling about when he picked cotton as a boy and dreamed of one day becoming governor of this good state.

"Hell-o, Mr. Stumpy. You campaigning?" I asked.

"I'm heah for court, Halle-lujah, but you run git you one of them watermelons off the back of the truck jes the same. Each melon's got my picfur stamped on it." Mr. Stumpy seemed nice enough to me.

When I slipped into the kitchen to get a knife to cut the watermelon, Mama said that since Stumpy had showed up sober, no harm would be done if I stayed on and heard court if I was still bound and determined.

"But you must remember, Halle," Mama reminded me every Saturday, "you're not to mention one thing you hear in court to your little friends. Court is strictly business."

"Yes'm," I answered back every Saturday, and never mentioned a word because I didn't have that many "little friends" anyway.

The facts of the case were quick to come out. Stumpy's latest political platform included a promise to bring progress to our county in the form of a shopping center. The location of the shopping center was to be right in the center of the county. The problem arose when Little Joseph's followers discovered that the proposed site of the shopping center was the exact location which Little Joseph rented for his camp meetings and prophesied to be the Chosen Place when Jesus came again. Little Joseph's mother pressed charges on the basis that Stumpy's

political career was nothing but a joke anyway and that his platform defamed Little Joseph's character and injured his career in that it disputed that message he had received from the Lord.

The man who owned this much-disputed plot of land was what Stumpy called a Yankee land monger. He had come South several years ago and bought up a lot of land at a good price, knowing it would increase in value and that, until the selling price was right, he could lease it to folks like Little Joseph's group. Now this Yankee could have straightened the whole business out just by saying what he planned to do with the land, but he couldn't be reached. He was off somewhere else buying up more land. So, Daddy was left with a case on his hands that revolved around "if" Stumpy were elected, and "if" Jesus really did tell Little Joseph that He was coming to his campground. I guess the case would have proved dull when Daddy threw it out if Stumpy had kept quiet—but he didn't.

"Ain't you gonna have this Holy Roller heah to com-pen-sate me for the morning's work I've missed, Judge?" Stumpy bellowed. "They've kept me away from a good twenty-five votes this morning while my watermelons are settin' ouch yonder in the hot sun."

"Don't ask for a contempt charge, Stumpy," Daddy warned, but was drowned out by Little Joseph's mother chanting, "Brother, we'll say our prayers to the Lord on your behalf. Maybe it'll earn you a home in Heaven—save you from eternal torment—Praise the Lord..."

"Order!" my daddy demanded, but still to no avail. Stumpy was Gawd-damning "Holy Joseph and his rollers," saying their baptizing creek was soon gonna be full of cement. Joseph and his mother were quoting Bible verses and praising the Lord, their eyes shut tightly and their arms waving in the air.

When Daddy finally did get order again, he sentenced Stumpy to attending Little Joseph's tent revival every night for as long as it lasted, and warn-

ed that until after the election, neither party was to even mention the future of the plot of land in question. All three of them stalked out of the kitchen silently, new anger directed at my daddy. When the kitchen was cleared, Daddy explained to me that this was a heavy sentence on both parties because Stumpy was not a church-going man and now would have to suffer through a tent revival, and that Joseph's people surely didn't want the likes of Stumpy at their meetings, but would have to accept him since their plight was saving sinners. Daddy lit his pipe and then just sat a long time with it in his mouth; he had a faraway look on his face like when T.R. and the girl left court together that day.

"Daddy," I asked that afternoon on the way to see Digger, "is Mr. Digger crazy because he gets buried like a dead man just for some cause?"

"No, Hallelujah, I think Digger's the smart one," Daddy answered a long time later.



CULLOWHEE MOUNTAIN SUNSET

late evenings summer sun
lapping across my back, creeping
up the rockface, last
lingering in the treetops.
strong days strong undoing.
slow shadows silhouette
distant hills
against softening prisms sky;
the wild daylilies withdrawing,
doves cooing to roost, crows
beckon for night shenanigans;
crickets chirping forth and
back and back
light fading to the song;
an owl warns,
night birthed, night birthed.

—Doug Knotts

RISING WIND

As our largest oak tree fell—
slowly, slowly, as in our dreams—
The sound of the wind changed,
Filling the great void that was made.
After, we remembered no sound
Made by the falling tree itself.

I should not wonder to wake now
In the darkness, feeling my own limbs
As heavy and strangely flung
As the oak's—
to wake now straining,
As in a dream, to hear
The sound of the rising wind.

—Jim Allen

ANDERSONVILLE

You wear wild flowers in your hair;
they grow in clusters
from the dust
of the thousands
buried there.

Your laughter flows as from the spring
that gave them hope
to quench their fears—
a smut-filled swamp
to which to cling.

Your whispers stir the trees to tune:
a past that echoes
human wails—
a song your mock-peace
can't impugn.

—Pam Spencer

COLORADO HIGH

Red-hued lands stretch for miles around,
New sun enlivening ancient monuments.

Lofty road, climb high,
Let me see those life-filled shapes.

For such was my life;
Once empty, now filled.

Like morning sun, you shone on me,
Filling the empty plain with hope.

—Steve Isbell



PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM P. WHITE, JR., ©1975

SCIENTIFIC WAR EAGLES

FLY HIGH !

Editor's Note: The following manuscript arrived at the Circle office in a plain brown envelope with a smudged postmark. However, when it was opened a rejection slip with the letterhead of Physical Review fell out, giving us some clue to its past history. Always wishing to encourage scholarly research and achievements at Auburn and to call attention to the accomplishments of Auburn scientists, the Circle, while making no pretensions of being a scientific journal, decided to publish this highly original work.

Physics Department
Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama 36830
October 31, 1975

Editor, *Physical Review*
New York, New York

Dear Sir:

In view of the current interest in the possibility of synthesizing of the so-called superheavy* elements, I believe you would be interested in the following reports which have come into my hands directly or indirectly from three Auburn University undergraduates (all, oddly enough, in Elementary Education!) who have become interested in the problem.

You will notice that all three investigators are claiming discovery of the same element, No. 112. Their reports of properties are not inconsis-

* Superheavy elements are those having atomic numbers in the neighborhood of 112-116, compared to the atomic number of the heaviest natural element, Uranium, which is 92. Scientists expect them to exist but to be rather unstable.

—Sci. Ed.

tent, as the elements may well have allotropic forms, and the experience of the unfortunate Ms. Blakney seems to bear out the findings of Cox and Deanhardt that Element 112 (whichever name is finally adopted) is indeed tricky stuff to handle. I believe the work of all these budding young scientists should be recognized, and I urge you to publish their reports in their own words, so that the entire scientific community may judge their worth, and perhaps aid in determining the question of priority of discovery.

Yours very truly,
C.R. Ward, Ph.D.

Dear Sir:

I would like to report the discovery of element 112, the properties of which can be summarized as follows:

Confusium (Cn)	
Boiling Point	263° C
Melting Point	+182° C
Atomic Weight	324
Density	10g/cm ³

Confusium was discovered as a result of a freak accident that occurred in Georgia during the spring of 1975. A worker pouring a primary zinc protective shield around a nuclear reactor slipped on the remains of somebody's lunch, and the large smelting pot of zinc crashed into the reactor's atomic pile. An autopsy revealed shrapnel fragments of a strange nature. Further investigation by the Atomic Energy Commission proved them to be pig iron fragments whose irregular pitted surface was filled with an unknown element. In July this element was

isolated by Herbert Schwartzdinger in the AEC lab at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. It was originally named "Schaartzdingerium," but by international agreement the name was changed to "Confusium" to prevent possible ethnic overtones.

Already the discovery of Confusium has sent tremors of excitement through the scientific world. Its crystal lattice has yet to be exactly determined, but it seems to be such that it is extremely sensitive to light and sound waves and expands greatly in response to temperature. Its conductive ability seems to increase in an undetermined proportion to temperature. Confusium seems to have an unlimited future in high speed, long distance communications.

Yours truly,
Karen Deanhardt

June 1, 1975

Dear Sir:

I am delighted to report that I have discovered a new element, and I would appreciate being considered for the Nobel prize in Chemistry this year.

I shall tell you how this profound discovery was made.

One night at dinner I had made my usual pan of cornbread for my husband, who is a lover of the crumbly stuff and the only eater of this substance in our family.

After having eaten one hefty bite of his favorite delicacy, he keeled over and slumped out of his chair.

I examined the cornbread immediately, discovered a silvery metal

inside, and assumed it to be poisonous. I was so thrilled! I had just discovered COXIUM, element 112 in the periodic chart.

I decided to try lighting a piece of the metal, and it burned spontaneously in the air, which meant that it was phyrophoric. It was very reactive and would combine readily with oxygen.

It forms several compounds, two of which are Coxium Oxide (CxO) and Coxium Chloride ($CxCl_2$).

Metallic Coxium reacts with acid to release hydrogen, and by this time my husband needed any help he could get. He would settle for hydrogen if he could not get oxygen!

I gave him a tablespoonful of HCl and he revived immediately.

Here is a summary of the properties:

Coxium (Cx)	112
Atomic Number	112
Boiling Point	1000° C
Melting Point	517.5° C
Atomic Weight	322

Density 4.5 g/cm³
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Jean R. Cox

• • •

Ms. Dawn Blakney
Allison Labs
Auburn University
May 5, 1975

My dear fellow scientists!

While experimenting one twilight evening in my laboratory, I happened to stumble across what I am convinced is the 112th element of the Periodic Table. I have named it Lucescit (Lc), which is Latin for "daybreak". Unfortunately it is very difficult to test this element because its half life is only forty-six seconds. In addition, the synthetic processing of Lucescit is extremely difficult. This element has the valence of +2. The density of Lucescit

is 16.32, the boiling point is 2400° C, the melting point is 1500° C, and the atomic weight is 327. At the moment I am mixing Lucescit (Lc) and H²O...hmmm, no chemical reaction...oh, maybe a dash of

June 15, 1975

Sirs:

This letter was found in the laboratory of the late Ms. Blakney, so we decided to send it on to this address. She was blown up while experimenting with some chemicals. We are terribly sorry and offer our sincerest regrets.

Yours truly,
T. Lytle
Attorney at Law
Auburn, Alabama



THE RAPE OF THE TOY BOX

While Merrily Masked Marbles mixed the Marmalade
And Tiny Toy Soldiers tinkered in the Jam
Teddy Bear's Boys had the Dolls all laid
And no one really gave a damn

Winnie the Pooh sat idly by
Tigger had a grandstand view
Raggedy Andy passed it all off as
"Oh, Ann, it'll never happen to you."

Beautiful but boisterous bouncy ball said
"How horrible a thing to do.
If I'm elected Toy Box King
I'll show ya a thing or two."

"No you won't," sighed a silvery slinky snake.
"Forget it, you're a fool.
Stuffed animals run these wooden walls
And we're all just the tools."

—David Williams

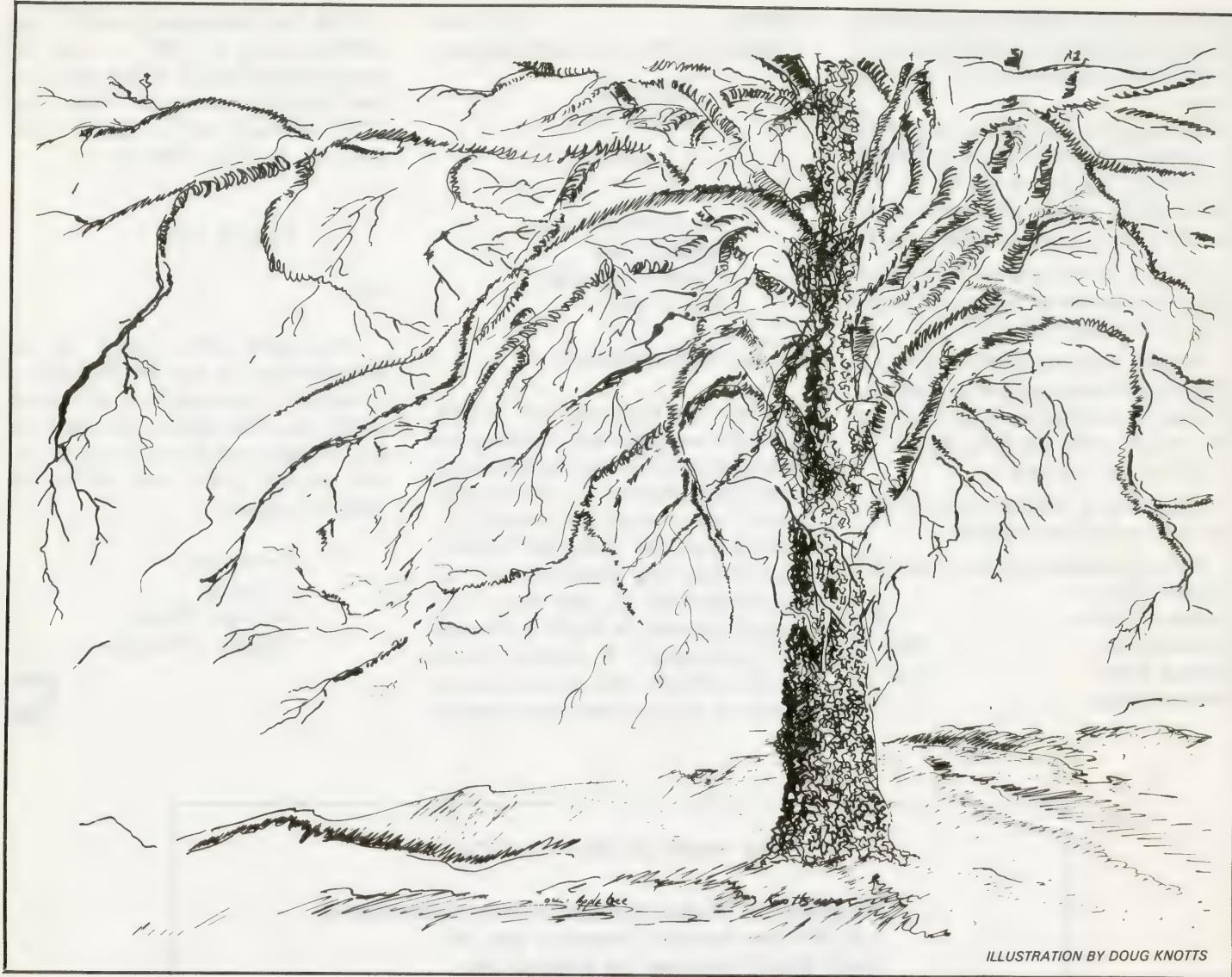


ILLUSTRATION BY DOUG KNOTTS

A.M. IN AUTUMN

FICTION BY THOMAS A. COOLIDGE

"You know, it's really beginning to feel like fall," he says, pulling back the curtain and allowing the morning light to fill the paneled bedroom. "The pecan leaves are blowing all over the ground outside. God, I love this time of year."

She turns over slowly glimpsing the white-tiled ceiling and pulling the tousled sheet up to her chin.

"What time is it?" she mumbles quietly trying to grasp the morning's brightness pouring through the gritty window panes. "Is it time to go to class yet? I hope I didn't oversleep."

"Quarter past seven. We're only about five minutes behind schedule," he says, pausing for emphasis, "especially considering that party last night."

"Don't remind me," she quickly sighs.

"Didn't you enjoy it?" he asks with a pained look of concern on his face. "You were all smiles and mischief last night."

"Of course I did."

"Well, what's the problem?"

"Today is Monday," she says quietly, "I've got to get motivated."

He crawls back into the old wrought iron bed trying to maneuver his feet under the dishevelled bedclothes. It creaks with every effort.

"Let's cuddle some before we roll on out to the cold, hard world," he says trying to sound convincing.

"No," she says, "I've got to get up and get going."

She throws the covers off to his side of the bed and walks into the bathroom. He notices the contour of her full breasts and sinewy hips as the light plays through her pink flanneled nightgown when she passes the win-

dow. Returning his stare to the tiled fiberboard ceiling, he considers the possibilities of a future with this woman.

"Hurry up," he shouts at the mirrored bathroom door, "I've got to get in there myself, you know."

The only response is the splashing of water from the makeshift shower, and he redirects his thoughts to that blustery day last spring when he first met her.

Initially it was her long flowing brown hair that attracted his eye. Then he noticed the radiant smile and the healthy outdoor appearance as she pedaled her white ten-speed bicycle past his garage apartment.

They had known each other for six months now, and she still puzzled him. A small indecisive woman, several years younger than he, but when moods were right and spirits were fine, she could smile and all the uncertainty of their relationship would be forgotten.

"Your turn," she says, "Hey, come on, you better quit dreaming and get going or you'll be late. I'll start breakfast while you're showering."

He pauses to kiss her shoulder lightly as she combs out her wet hair in front of the full length mirror on the door.

"What can I look forward to for breakfast when I get out of the shower?" he asks, already knowing the answer.

"We'll probably have the usual," she says, never taking her eyes from the mirror. "You know, cheese toast and orange juice."

"Yum, yum!" he says facetiously, pulling the door softly behind him.

As he enters the kitchen, the warm smell of toasted bread reaches his nostrils and the annoying sound of the local radio station assails his ears.

"Boy, I get so tired of hearing those same top forty tunes," he says with a pained expression. "You'd think that a station like that would play more soft music to gradually wake you up."

"Do you want me to put on an album?" she asks quietly while shaking the juice in an old milk jar.

"Nah, you go ahead," he answers, "I'm sorry I'm bitching. I'll do it. What would you like to hear?"

"Joni Mitchell would be nice," she answers softly.

"How's breakfast coming?" he asks.

"It's ready when you are," she says smiling. "We've got to hurry. I want to get to class early so I can review my French."

They both sit down and eat hurriedly.

Sipping the orange juice, he silently observes her cutting the cheese toast on her plate.

"What are you looking at?" she says with a sidelong glance.

"You," he responds.

Silence.

"Well, what's the matter?"

He shrugs. "I can't figure you out," he says while raising the juice glass to his lips.

After a long sip he rises and pushes the chair back with his leg.

"You make me so happy sometimes and so uncertain at others. I think that you've been with me long enough to know how you feel about us."

She responds by quietly lowering her eyes to her plate.

"I mean," he continues, "you know I love you and I want to be with you."

"Let's not talk about it now. We've got to go to class," she answers, rising softly and carrying her plate to the sink.

"Are you through?"

"Yes," he answers, "thanks for breakfast. Are you working tonight?"

"Yes," she says, "and I've got a paper due on Wednesday, so I'll have to read tonight after work."

"Of course," he says approvingly, "I need to get some stuff done, too. Where are we going to study?"

"I'll probably go to the library," she answers as she puts two notebooks into a drab olive backpack.

Observing her quietly as she prepares to leave for her class, he runs his eyes the length of her figure. The simplicity of faded bluejeans and cotton T-shirt seemed to compliment the natural beauty of her face and body.

"Do you want to come over this evening," he asks while arranging his own texts and folders, "after we get our studying done?"

"I don't know," she shrugs, "Let's see what happens."

He shakes his head, smiling slightly.

Turning off the stereo, he notices the rustle of brittle leafless branches against the apartment. Aiming a longing glance through the bedroom door, he sees her dressing for the season in a worn black cardigan. Her shadow from the morning sun leans over the disarranged bed and its tangled sheets.

"What about tonight," he asks, "can we get together?"

She listens but is silent.

"I'm sorry. I don't mean to badger you, but you know how I feel."

"I know," she responds slowly.

Averting her eyes, she picks up her pack and strides hesitantly toward the door.

"Are you ready to go?" she asks.

"Yeah," he says disgustedly, "let me grab my junk. It's going to be a long Monday."

As he pulls the door forcefully closed she says to him, "I really enjoyed last night; I like to be with you, but I'm just not sure about the situation."

Putting his hand lightly behind her neck, he pulls her close and kisses a cheek lightly.

"Maybe so," he sadly answers.

They slowly descend the wooden stairs of the old garage apartment and step into the street. The crisp leaves crinkle underfoot. The wind rustles the trees in the early sunlight.

"You know," he says distantly, "it's really beginning to feel like fall."



BALLOONS

At the fair
I watched a man
release
his handful of balloons
and those shouts
of color
rose through the air
just like my words would
if I were talking to you.
I watched
until the balloons
were no larger than pinheads
and then suddenly were gone
and the sky again was silent.

—A. J. Wright

IS THERE INTELLIGENT LIFE ON EARTH?

A BOOK REVIEW BY CHARLOTTE WARD

War, famine, dehumanization. These constitute the triple threat that faces the intelligent inhabitants of the third planet from a modest star, one of a hundred billion stars in an average spiral galaxy, one of billions of galaxies in an expanding universe. Nobel Prize-winning Swedish-born physicist Hannes Alfven and his sociologist wife Kerstin examine the origins and the approaches to solution of these problems in their recent book, *Living on the Third Planet* (W. H. Freeman and Company, San Francisco, 1972).

We can make a more intelligent approach to solving the problems, the Alfvens believe, if we understand more fully the nature, origin, and uniqueness of human life. The evolution of a lake provides a useful, but incomplete, analogy. Life begins in a newly formed lake (dug out by an ice sheet, perhaps) on a very small scale. A few minute organisms, washed from the land or arriving as airborne spores, colonize the new habitat—and flourish. Larger plants and animals arrive and multiply, for every organism has two fundamental drives: to preserve individuals and to maintain the species. So each one multiplies to the limit of its supplies of food, water, air, and mineral requirements. Eventually, the limits are exceeded; wastes accumulate as raw materials run out; the lake dies. The instinct for self-preservation which characterizes the individual and the species does not extend to the ecosystem.

The analogy between the self-contained ecosystem of the lake and that of the third planet breaks down when we compare their highest levels of life. No lake-dwelling organism knows what is going on in the ecosystem as a whole or how to stop the progress of its evolution to death. The third planet, presumably, does have an inhabitant able to see the whole picture. The Alfvens see overpopulation, comparable to that in the lake, as one inevitable critical

problem, but one that is solvable, at least in terms of the technological development of the third planet today. The more difficult problem is to devise a way to apply the available technology. Who will be in charge?

Throughout the history of human society those in charge have been either politicians or militarists. More recently, a great deal of power has been invested in businessmen. Still more recently, scientists have been generators of power, but the power has been administered by the traditional political-military structure. The Alfvens express grave doubts about the ability of any traditional power structure to solve the problems of war and famine because the primary concern of any group in power is the maintenance of that power, not the good of all mankind (i.e. the preservation of the planetary ecosystem). On the other hand, excessive centralization contributes to the third problem—dehumanization.

Living on the Third Planet does not propose solutions to the third planet's problems. It does attempt to pull together all the tangled threads of economic, agricultural, military, political, and demographic affairs to give at least a complete sketch of the planet as an ecosystem, but an ecosystem that can be controlled intelligently. A symbiotic relationship exists between human life and the "natural" environment. Perhaps this situation has developed on another planet, circling another star in our own or another galaxy. We don't know. If we did know, either that we are unique in the universe or that we are not, we might have something more to go on to solve our problems. But we only have knowledge of ourselves. On our planet, we are unique. We are not merely "naked apes." Our wars are the result of our political priorities, say the Alfvens, not our aggressive animal natures. The future does indeed have its darker aspects. But the intelligent

life that has developed on the third planet, having been alerted to the problems, *should* be able to solve them.



SALLIE

She shuffles slowly
from room to room
picking up child-things
that grow from the floor
and all day long,
she puts them back
where they don't belong
but it don't matter.

For twenty-odd years
she's worked and lived
in shadows cast
by demigods
but it's not the same
'cause all the characters
seem to change
from time to time.

The kids she mammied
are grown and gone
but like tradition
she endures.
She knows enough
of life to live:
her hands are tough
from all the years.

—Pam Spencer

BETRAYAL

she was not much of a friend
but then again neither was i
so we danced in circles
brushing palms in suspended time
neither too old nor young
now too late

....

again i awoke in middle night
wondering of you
who are lost amid the passing identities
that fade within my memory
when people are little known,
better known, not known—forgotten
among labyrinths of darkness.
in nightmare's sweat
i hear my heart against the wall.
is the door locked?
i fear all strange things
have entered thru the open door.

the pills i take to make sleep
create dark dreams.
one is, but it was, and it is not—
i have found you in desolate structures
painting pictures of christ.
no one was there
and you were yearning for the pennies
that were neither copper nor gold.
so we danced our rituals around old circles
brushing palms thru suspended time
until i awoke
fearful for your safety and gay dreams.
the front door was not locked.

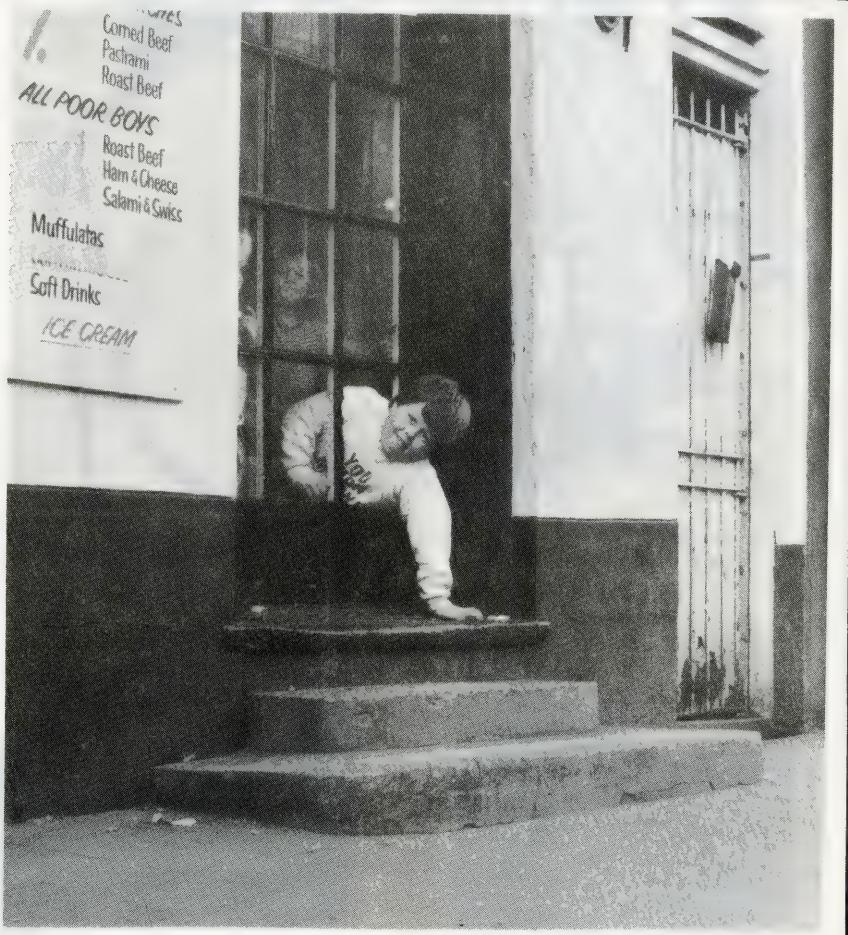
i lay in bed until dawn began
then i sought empty tenements
and peered in musty rooms
searching for you or pictures of christ.
but there was only the illusive vision—
grotesque shadows
that move around, about, among
obstructing us as mortals.

—Janice Bickham

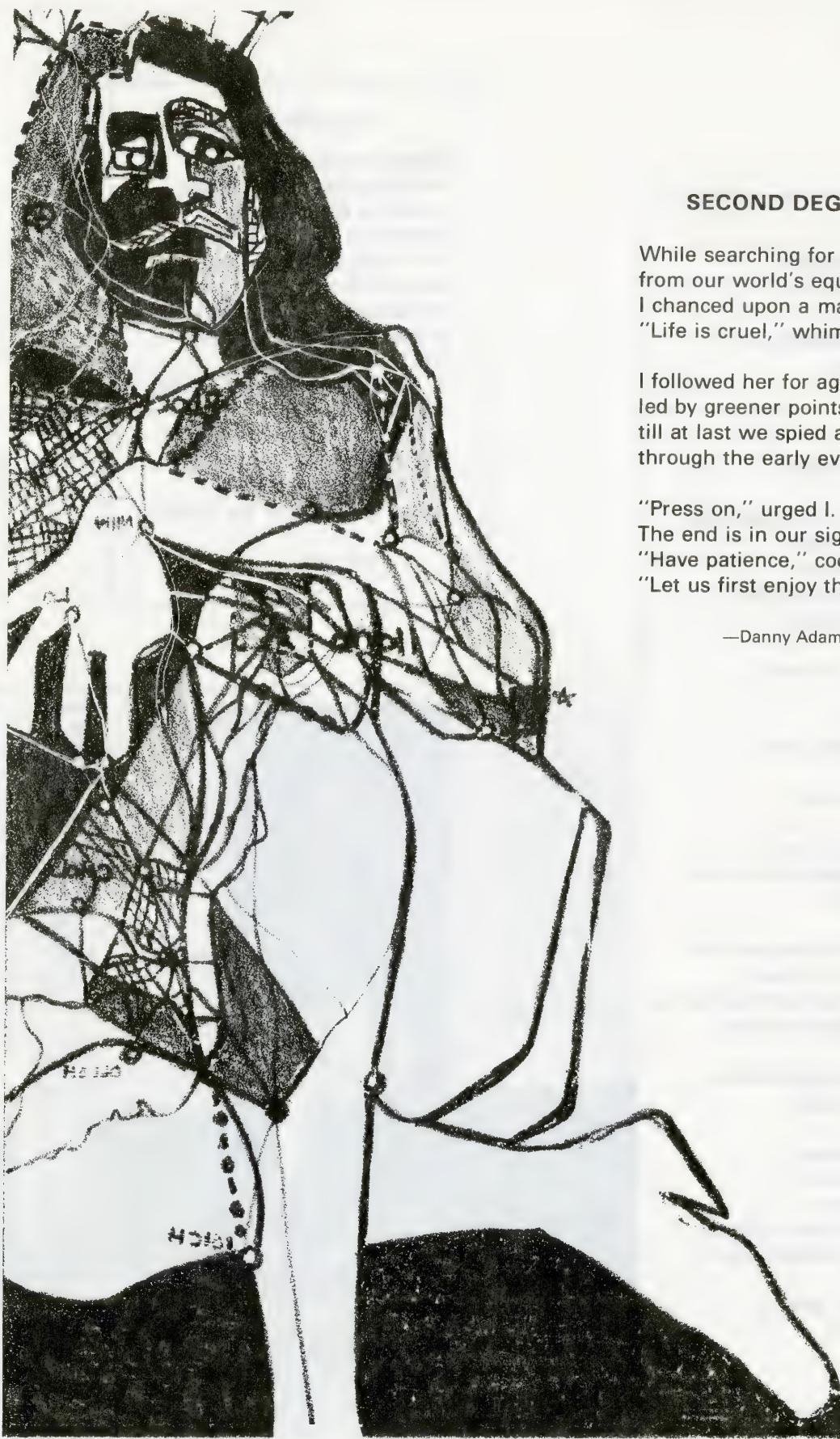
DYNAMIC

Karate woman
springing her omnipotence,
a lashing fleetness,
breaks the cage of all bodies.
Pure crouch and spring,
leap and thrust—
on through lean chivalry
snaps the cage of illusions.
The thought projects:
to go through, to deny repulsion,
As, treading the air,
muscled by furied prediction
she inhales the atmosphere
and drowns rigid bones,
crying conquest of the heart.

—W. Myles



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SECOND DEGREE BURN

While searching for a hideout
from our world's equality,
I chanced upon a maiden
"Life is cruel," whimpered she.

I followed her for ages,
led by greener points of view
till at last we spied a summit
through the early evening dew.

"Press on," urged I. "Why do we wait?
The end is in our sight!"
"Have patience," cooed the vixen.
"Let us first enjoy the night."

—Danny Adams

ILLUSTRATION BY DOTTIE HITCHCOCK

MIDNIGHT WINE

I saw a land that was divine
I saw it with my midnight wine

Midnight wine, O midnight wine
Will burn forever in my mind

And if you seek to end your strife
Let midnight wine into your life

And when this world has passed us by
For midnight wine we'll surely cry

Midnight wine, O midnight wine
Will burn forever in my mind

The stars cry out for midnight wine
Then softly taste the end of time

The universe will surely die
But midnight wine will get me by

Midnight wine, O midnight wine
Will burn forever in my mind

With midnight wine I truly see
I see beyond eternity

And out there far beyond all time
We sadly sip our midnight wine

Midnight wine, O midnight wine
It swings on softly without rhyme

Will burn within me without cease
Until I find my final peace

—Tom Snelling

SCRAPBOOK

Give me your smile
and I'll keep it
forever
pressed tightly between
the crisp clean tissue sheets
of my
memory.

—Carole E. Mickle



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BRADFORD

NOTES FROM A TUPPER-WARE PARTY

May-December turtledoves
Mrs. Smith knows how to snub
Alligator in the tub
T.V.'s coughing rub-a-dub.

Runny nose at Sunday school
Ruffles in a swimming pool
Mrs. Jones has played the fool
Johnny's learned to use the stool

Bunions in the same old place
Never mind the lifted face
Garlic, sage, ginger, mace
Dropped my book and fell from grace.

Bible salesman on the loose
Abscess in an aching tooth
Cedar, juniper, and spruce
Battery has lost its juice.

Eager is a percolator
Chocolate is a constipator
Movie at the new theater
Interesting as mashed potato.

—Mary Eleanor Mockridge

DO YOU KNOW

Do you know what it is to love,
Or are you playing games
Until your parents tell you to
Come home for dinner?

—Christy Hudgins

WITH YOU

With you
love becomes a ride on a merry-go-round
first up
then down
until it seems not worth the dime I pay
to ride.

—Carole E. Mickle

WOMEN CATEGORIZED . . .

Store-bought, gift-wrapped pretty I am not.
Heaven forbade I should join that lot!

Chitter-chatter gossips and feline dames
No more than irk me with their silly games.

Prissy-sissy gals I most abhor —
The thing they do best is bore, bore, bore.

Dare-to-bare-it broads who show their asses
Sicken all but those who make lewd passes.

Sugar-sweet girls who ooze like honey
Try for the men with lots of money . . .

Stiff-backed, acid-tongued bitches coolly stare —
I'd take them all on for a ten-cent dare!

Prim and proper "ladies" who tease their bleached blonde hair
Exercise only when they climb the social stair.

I could go farther, and try to list the rest . . .
but I might call a name that fits ME best!!

—Becky Sharpe

Discovery

You did not perceive the surprise that leapt within the heart beating beside yours when, gazing deep inside your eyes, she discovered the swells that are your soul. Restless surging swells—rising, rolling, finally crashing on jubilant shores—surprised that unsuspecting dreamer who, imagination in strict control, was unprepared to comprehend such a man, shockingly more complex than dreams. Later you warned her, innocent though confident of her intuitions. You cared to warn her—you use people. But she already knew, told by swells, the waters of your soul that scream to be free, bound by shores unyieldingly harsh.

— Marietta Caldwell

My Old Swing

The old swing is gone now, and all that is left of the old chinaberry tree it hung from is a stump. Yet, in my memories the swing and I are once again together. Trying to touch the limbs of the crepe myrtle bush, we would play together in the bright late-springtime sunshine. How delightful it was to look out over the freshly plowed fields and pretend that I was grown up and my swing was really an airplane! Or my "pretend" boyfriend would be pushing me higher into the air, and my feet wouldn't have to touch the ground! I realize now that it was all a little girl's "just pretend" fancy, and I sit quietly with my memories on the stump of the chinaberry tree.

—Karen Brown



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SUMMER EVENING

Being raised among this green and mist
How can I know bitterness;
How can it then infest my heart?
There should be for me always a cool green core
To come in every moment of despair,
Like a violin solo through the dark.
I should be invulnerable to pain,
Mist and fireflies being part
Of my essence, my inscape, and my heart.

If beauty then can stand so tall,
And mist entwine my peaceful hours,
How then can hatred rule my days,
And love be gall and hope be stark?
Why do I fight against the light
And not the dark?

—Ann Pearson

SINGED AT BOTH ENDS

what can we do
but stand here
and shout encouragement?
none of us can swim/
our only boat sank yesterday/
our rope is rotten
at the core/
we couldn't reach you
with even our longest pole.
what can we do
but scream
**WHAT A FRIEND YOU HAVE
IN JESUS**
very loudly

so you can hear us
above the roar
of the rapids?

—A. J. Wright

Jack mountain

A DREAM OF RECONCILIATION

My soul has fallen on dark and troubled days, I stumble and falter along the verge of a sheer cliff below which yawns a vast abyss, the shadows thicken fast around me, I yearn in vain for one illuminating ray and find it not, all that I encounter seems alien and strange, the old touchstones have faded and vanished with the violets of my youth, and clouds of despair descend with dense and suffocating mist.

Where is the friendly hand to guide me safely on the perilous way, where the unfailing lamp to light the tortuous

path, where the soothing voice to quiet my fears and assuage my anguished heart, where the beloved familiar scene to welcome and comfort my weary eyes—where the balm for my troubled soul?

Isolation and alienation reign absolute, my plaintive cries avail not, silence beyond comprehension prevails, neither whisper nor echo emanates from the encompassing mist or the yawning abyss, my own voice fails, its futile protests cease, my faltering limbs succumb at last, and I crum-



ple to the dank and barren earth that succors not.

Exhaustion hurls the tormented beat of troubled heart, resignation follows in its wake, and soft but clear a serene voice reminds: "Be still and know.... Be still and know.... Be still and know...." And I know that I am known: the sheer cliff crumbles, the dense mist rises, the dark abyss vanishes, and a fertile valley appears beneath a fair peak ascending heavenward into a blue sky.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID BRADFORD

